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ABSTRACT

Five prospective elementary teachers and five prospective teacher trainers were introduced to the experience of initiating and developing a language-centered curriculum. A collection of articles, written by the doctoral and master's candidates in the program, represents significant aspects of their experience. The titles of the articles are the following: (1) "One Person's View of Language in the Elementary School," (2) "A Unit on Neighborhoods: Grade Two," (3) "Language Face to Face," (4) "Introducing Individualized Reading in First Grade," (5) "Introducing 'Free' Reading Periods," (6) "Mini Courses: Evaluation of a Curricular Innovation at Heman Street School," (7) "Working on Writing," (8) "Language Throughout the Integrated Day," (9) "Learning Sight Words," (10) "Replication Study: Word Boundaries," (11) "'Action Research' on Spelling Methods in Grade Two," and (12) "Listening and Listening-Reading at Two Rates of Presentation by Fifth Grade Pupils." (CK)

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LANGUAGE FACE TO FACE

DEVELOPING A LANGUAGE CENTERED CURRICULUM AT THE HEMAN STREET SCHOOL

Edited by
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-- An EPDA Project --

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The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred.

PREFACE

In 1969-70, the staff of the Heman Street School in East Syracuse, New York, co-operated with personnel from the Reading and Language Arts Center of Syracuse University on an EPDA project to introduce five prospective elementary teachers and five prospective teacher trainers to the experience of initiating and developing a language-centered curriculum. This collection of articles, written by the doctoral and master's candidates in the program, represents significant aspects of their experience.

The introductory article by the editor provides an overview of the project and the school setting. The several articles in Part One not only suggest the philosophy of language development that underlies the project but describe classroom practices and curricular innovations that emerged during the year. The articles in Part Two report research studies developed by the doctoral candidates.

Part One begins with an essay by Christine San Jose, who is a candidate for a Ph.D. degree in English Education, in which she thinks through the uses of language and constructs a framework for teachers to use in planning and assessing language instruction. Mrs. San Jose is a graduate of London University Institute of Education and has taught in English schools. At the end of the 1969-70 school year, she had the opportunity to visit schools in Leicestershire and to view developments in primary education there against the background of her year in the Heman Street School. Her observations, reported in the last article in Part One, "Language Throughout the Integrated Day," clarify popular impressions of British schools while offering insights to American teachers experimenting with new curricular settings.

The five master's candidates worked in all the classrooms under the guidance of the Heman Street teachers and the doctoral candidates who were serving them as consultants. They assisted in all the research studies reported in Part Two, and they developed many informal experiments of their own. Some of their experiences are indirectly reflected in the articles of the doctoral candidates, and we have borrowed from their logs to describe activities in writing, oral language, and reading. Chris Paully stayed on at Heman Street in 1970-71 as the librarian. Winanne Nelson, Sandra Sutor, Roberta Brown, and April Rowland took up teaching positions in New York State and elsewhere upon completion of their master's degrees.

Ted Mork, one of the five doctoral candidates, was particularly interested in the teaching of reading and in the development of children's voluntary reading. He has contributed two chapters, one describing a first grade teacher's efforts to add individualized reading to her basal program, the other describing free reading periods in the upper grades. Mr. Mork continues in the program in the current year.

The third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers at Heman Street wanted to break out of the traditional pattern of self-contained, graded classrooms. They sought to do so at least for part of the day by teaching mini courses cutting across grade lines and across subject areas. At the end of the year they brought in a consultant, John Dopyera, to help them evaluate their efforts and decide on new directions. Mr. Dopyera has contributed a part of his report as "Mini Courses: Evaluation of a Curricular Innovation at Heman Street School." To add detail and flavor to this evaluative report, Chris Paully has recorded her experiences in "A Mini Course on Folk Songs," page 72.

Mrs. San Jose's outstanding contribution to the Heman Street project was in creative drama and oral language development. Her article on pages 31 to 38 gives one example of her work as she sought to demonstrate in a second grade how social studies, music, and art can become vehicles for language development. In the chapter titled "Language Face to Face" Mrs. San Jose has drawn together excerpts from papers by the teachers growing out of a workshop assignment. Mrs. San Jose is continuing to work with Heman Street teachers and this year's master's candidates.

Part Two presents research studies undertaken at Heman Street by the doctoral candidates, not only in fulfillment of degree requirements, but as part of their development as teacher trainers. An example of this second purpose is the study of spelling instruction designed and executed by Neil Mullen, a first-year doctoral candidate, in cooperation with the second grade teachers and the master's candidates. This example of classroom research is on pages 121 to 136, "'Action Research' on Spelling Methods in Grade Two." Mr. Mullen continues in the project in 1970-71.

Two of the doctoral candidates were in their third year of study when the project began and so they were able to complete their doctoral research in the East Syracuse-Minoa Schools. Richard Bruland's study compares fifth graders' performances in listening and in listening while following a printed text. He varied the rates of presentation of the recorded texts to assess these effects. His study is reported on pages 137 to 155. Dr. Bruland is now on the staff of the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay.

Robert Christina, the second doctoral candidate to complete his program during the first year of the project, was primarily interested in developing readiness for reading among pre-school and kindergarten children. His doctoral study emerged from this

interest. He tested how well kindergarten children who had not been taught to read would retain eight sight words when these were presented in i/t/a and in traditional orthography. He also studied the effects of tracing the words in both modes of presentation. This study is summarized on pages 109 to 114. Another study growing out of his interests in beginning reading is reported as "Replication Study: Word Boundaries," on pages 115 to 119. Here he studied first graders at Heman Street to see whether they knew where printed words begin and end.

Dr. Christina is now on the staff of Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan.

The idea for the Heman Street Project originated with William D. Sheldon, director of the Reading and Language Arts Center, who has served for several years as a consultant to the East Syracuse-Minoa School district. Having studied this school closely, comparing it with others in the district, he recognized it as a common type of disadvantaged school and one therefore particularly suited to become a laboratory for developing a language-centered curriculum. He recognized it, too, as a realistic setting in which to train future teachers and trainers of teachers. Initially the project was directed by William West, then associate professor of English Education at Syracuse University, now at the University of South Florida. Much of the later success of the program can be traced to his planning and direction during the crucial period of getting off the ground. He was assisted in this first year by Beulah Kidson, now at the University of Texas at El Paso, who concentrated her efforts at the pre-school, kindergarten, and primary grades. Fred Tuttle, now at State University of New York, Brockport, served the project as research assistant.

The contributions of several consultants can be acknowledged only inadequately in this brief statement; their various influences permeate the project. Our thanks therefore to the following consultants: Margaret Lay, Syracuse University; Priscilla Tyler, University of Missouri, Kansas City; Donald Tuttle, Basic Studies Branch of USOE; Ephraim H. Mizruchi, Syracuse University; Richard E. Pearson, Syracuse University; Ralph Staiger, International Reading Association; Clifford Bush, Newark State College; James Moffett, University of California at Berkeley; and Helen Kyle, Rhode Island College of Education.

In many ways the most important contributors to this project and to this monograph are the teachers, who appear only indirectly in these pages and whose names do not appear in the table of contents. Although we would have welcomed their direct statements, they found themselves too busy with teaching and with the writing tasks entailed in developing curricula and materials of instruction to write reflectively for an audience of unknown teachers. That their names should appear in this list of acknowledgments is slight thanks for major help: Celine Smith, Mary Lou Lovecchio, pre-school; Rhoda Sikes, kindergarten; Winona Spahr, Arlene Aspell, Sheila

Reback, first grade; Myledred Boylan, Alice Andrews, Virginia Michael, Judith Parziale, second grade; Phillip Bova, Susan Fox, third grade; Maureen McManus, Diane Seidenstein, James Mazza, fourth grade; Bettie Raugh, Lawrence Maggi, Gil Smith, fifth grade; Mary Kozlowski, reading specialist, Robert Galusha, physical education; Tillie Teitelbaum, art; Kay Allen, music; Virginia Kleinhans, library.

Dorothy Ward, principal of the Heman Street School, provided essential leadership in every aspect of the program. Grateful thanks are due to her as well as to Carl Hess, superintendent of schools, and Douglas Zoller, curriculum co-ordinator during the 1969-70 school year, and to the Board of Education, whose commitment to teacher education as well as to the improvement of educational opportunities for children made possible the Heman Street Project.

Margaret Early

Syracuse University
December, 1970

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INTRODUCTION

TOWARDS A LANGUAGE CENTERED CURRICULUM

by Margaret J. Early

In the 70's many elementary schools like the Heman Street School in East Syracuse will be moving towards a more open kind of curriculum, one that permits more flexibility in scheduling, less rigid adherence to timetables and required subject matter, one that nourishes, and takes advantage of, children's natural curiosity. Various labels are being attached to this trend; the open school, the integrated day, the child-centered curriculum are a few. We tied the label "language-centered curriculum" to the EPDA project at the Heman Street School because we wanted to emphasize that growth in the arts and skills of language is very nearly synonymous with personal development and because we wanted to establish the centrality of language to most kinds of learning.

To the EPDA staff and to the teachers at Heman Street, the idea of a "language centered curriculum" permitted various interpretations. Certainly, most of us attached to the concept some ideas about teaching and learning that are not at all revolutionary, not even innovative. To some of us the concept meant simply to do away with "periods" for teaching reading, to stop viewing "language" as a separate subject in the curriculum, to realize that reading, writing, speaking, and listening are inextricable, and to see to it that they permeate every subject in the curriculum. Since *language centered* meant more, rather than less, attention to the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and since the development of skills in language is notoriously individual, we knew that more individualized teaching and learning would be required. Counterbalancing this, since the uses of language are social as well as personal and individual, we knew that interaction in groups from two to twenty or more had to be an essential part of the program. Along with the concepts of individualizing and grouping came another very familiar idea: the need for diagnostic teaching. The more freedom children have in learning the more sure teachers must be that students acquire the tools of learning; hence the greater is the need for carefully observing, measuring, and guiding growth in skills.

The goals of individualization, flexible grouping, and diagnostic teaching have had wide currency in educational theory, and it would be hard to find an elementary school in which they are not earnestly sought. Indeed, so earnest is the search, that there is a tendency for teachers and administrators to try, sometimes in desperation, every idea that is touted as innovative. So hardchoices

must be made, sometimes resulting in preference for the old rather than the new. In my interpretation of *language centered*, for example, is an old-fashioned belief in the thoroughness of skills development and a conviction that this is best achieved in a self-contained classroom, where one teacher can get to know as thoroughly as possible the learning styles of twenty-five pupils. In fact, one major tenet is that the classroom teacher should be his own specialist in language skills, competent to diagnose and correct weaknesses in reading and listening, capable of expanding children's fluency and control in writing and speaking. In a school where language is the core, every teacher *must* be a specialist in the language arts, and if he is that, he can make good use of specialists in content areas. That is perhaps the real innovation in language centeredness: the idea that the elementary teacher should be a specialist in language, because language is basic to personal and social and intellectual development, and should have less need of help from a reading specialist, for example, than from a consultant in science or social studies or mathematics.

Although the ideas attached to the goal of the language-centered curriculum seemed familiar enough, anything but earth-shaking, and easily acceptable to elementary teachers, we realized that no one becomes a language specialist merely on good intentions. Moreover, at Heman Street in 1969-70 were sixteen classroom teachers and four "specials" with heterogeneous views of what a language specialist is and whether they cared to be one, with varying degrees of commitment to the idea that language arts and skills are central to the curriculum, with their own ideas of how to reach common goals, some with deeply entrenched habits of classroom management, a few beginners with as yet undefined notions of what a teacher is. Joining with these teachers in the common search for ways to center the curriculum on language were five prospective teachers, who were master's candidates in Reading Education, and five prospective trainers of teachers, doctoral candidates in Reading and in English Education. Although we were agreed upon a common goal, it was never our intention to standardize practices, not for teachers nor for learners. Indeed, the continuing problem at Heman Street, as in elementary education generally, is to achieve common purposes while preserving diversity in teaching styles. Diversity in style on a high plane of quality: different ways of serving children as learners but all effective.

Some of what was achieved in the first (and hardest) year of the project is described in the rest of these pages. For these experiences to be of use to other schools moving in a similar direction, it will be necessary to describe the setting and how we got started. Finally, we shall summarize what we have learned to this point about pupil and teacher education in a particular school setting and indicate new directions for the second year of the project.

The School Setting

Heman Street is a very ordinary school. That is why it was chosen as the site of this EPDA project aimed at preparing teachers and

teacher educators to develop elementary school programs that are centered on the language and personal growth of children. It is typical of hundreds of schools in our expanding megalopolitan areas throughout the country.

East Syracuse was a thriving railroad town when the New York Central was the vital link between New York City and the Middle West. Today it is a small city of diversified industries -- an air-conditioning plant, a pharmaceuticals laboratory, a division of General Motors, and the railroad still. As it merges with Syracuse on one of its boundaries, it is indistinguishable from its neighbor, the fourth largest city in New York State, but going east, houses and factories diminish into a semi-rural landscape. The East Syracuse-Minoa School District encompasses this whole area of merging urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods.

The Heman Street School is located in the original central village and draws its population from its immediate neighborhood of older one-family and two-family frame houses and from an outlying area of rural poverty. The children, coming from working class parents whose formal education has generally stopped short of high school graduation, enter school with limited language experience. Usually there is little reading material in the home and few opportunities for experiences that stimulate vocabulary and concept development. In many cases, the mothers work; in some cases, welfare supports the family.

Extensive testing data accumulated over the past several years showed that the Heman Street population compared unfavorably with every other school in the district, as well as with average populations in Onondaga County and New York State as a whole. For example, in 1967-68, 26 per cent of the children entering Heman Street scored below minimal competence on the New York State Tests of Readiness, compared with 15 per cent for the district. In the same year, 41 per cent of Heman Street third graders were below minimal competence on the New York State Tests of Reading, compared with 26 per cent for the district. From 1963 to 1967, I.Q. data from the California Test of Mental Maturity showed a progressive decline as children moved from first to fourth grade.

The educational disadvantages of the Heman Street children are accentuated by the fact that they must compete with children from more advantaged sections of the school district as they are all funneled into two middle schools and one high school. Their chief handicap to academic success is language deprivation. Entering school less "ready" for reading than other children, deprived at home of the stimulation of books and academically oriented conversation, they fail to acquire facility with tools of learning, such as reading and listening, talking and writing, and consequently their conceptual background remains deprived.

The fact that Heman Street children generally score lower on achievement tests than pupils from other schools in the district has

weighed heavily on their teachers' consciences. Of course, twenty teachers with individual personalities, different teaching styles, tolerance levels, and standards of achievement for themselves and for their pupils were bound to react in different ways to Heman Street's being at the bottom in district-wide testing. Some tended to accept as normal the generally low aspirations of most pupils and parents and to view the test results as truly indicative of potential. Others blamed the tests, calling them inappropriate and misleading. Still others were determined to "beat the tests" by the most direct methods.

Those who chose the latter course, and they were probably the majority of the staff in most years, concentrated on skills and facts, often to the detriment of broader, process-oriented studies. They tended to rely heavily, though not happily, on textbooks, not only for reading but the other language arts and for the content subjects as well. This approach, putting a still higher premium on reading skills, resulted in less learning, rather than more, for the children continued to fall short of the demands made by tests and texts. In the face of repeated failures, they lost interest in learning, and increasingly their teachers shared their apathy and frustration.

The foregoing details suggest something of the affective climate of the school in years up to and including the present. More needs to be said, for it is difficult to describe briefly without distorting. Some observers would have found in Heman Street the joyless wasteland that the romantic critics of education believe characteristic of American schools. (And I have characterized Heman Street at "typical," "ordinary.") But I doubt that many teachers or parents or even children would have been so flatly rejecting of either the school's intentions or achievements. No, in the affective climate of Heman Street, there were sunny spots. One of these certainly was the teachers' dissatisfaction with current methods and the genuine enthusiasm with which they welcomed the EPDA project. (Teachers who did not want to participate in the project were permitted to transfer to other schools in the district.) Another was their ability to specify problems, not just the big obvious ones, but the nagging day-to-day inadequacies that add up to failure. Sunniest of all, perhaps, was the teachers' warm acceptance of the children. They knew them well, their background and families. They had a sympathetic understanding of the problems the children face and a personal as well as professional desire to help them.

But it would be ridiculous to imply that the climate was uniformly sunny. When children fail, their teachers feel defeated, too.

The physical setting for the project offered pluses and minuses. The school plant was old-fashioned but comfortable. Built in 1938, its two stories contain well-lighted, attractive, fair-proportioned, mostly formal classrooms. A modern wing to house the kindergarten and first grade classes was added in 1968. The school has an up-to-date cafeteria, which can also be used as an additional auditorium,

a gymnasium, and an older, more formal auditorium, adequate storerooms and teachers' rooms, a health center, an office and testing room for the reading specialist, and a renovated library. The latter is well furnished and fairly well supplied, but it was not, early in the year, the center of busy activity that it should have been. Indeed, there and elsewhere throughout the building, there were too few signs that learning was its principal business. The corridors were generally bare and quiet; the walls unadorned with children's work. The classrooms generally revealed more clues to the teachers' personalities than to the children's.

Heman Street housed two kindergarten classes (one in the morning, one in the afternoon), three first grades, four second grades, two third, three fourth, and three fifth grades. The reading specialist, librarian, art teacher, and physical education teacher were full-time staff. A music teacher and speech therapist served Heman Street and other elementary schools in the district. In September, 1969, of the twenty full-time teachers, five were inexperienced, four others were new to the school, the reading teacher had been appointed in the preceding year.

The First Year of the Project

Because of the children's poor showing on achievement tests, the teachers' and administrators' first concern was for the improvement of reading. In the face of that persistent worry, when they wanted more than anything else an immediate, dramatic upswing on test results, it was not easy for them to consider plans which might not begin to show improvements for several years. Yet careful study of the "reading problem" suggested two basic causes that could be ameliorated only over the long haul. One inhibiting factor was that Heman Street children entered first grade with language handicaps and never made up for these deficiencies. So a first step toward future improvement would be to set up a pre-school for four-year-olds and to work for a continuous development of concepts and language through kindergarten and into first and second grades, assuring the best opportunities for successful acquisition of beginning reading skills. The second factor seemed to be the failure of some children, whose basic skills were adequate, to develop sufficient powers of comprehension either to match their potential on standardized tests or to stretch and grow as students in the content fields. These children needed the conviction, continuously reinforced, that reading is the best way of learning and that learning itself is worthwhile. Helping them to arrive at this conviction might mean taking the emphasis off reading (or at least off unmotivated reading lessons) and placing it on thinking, talking, raising questions, exploring ideas, solving problems -- activities, in short, that would lead to genuine reasons for reading.

Taking off in the first direction, that is, strengthening pre-reading language development, was relatively easy since it required more adding than changing. Two morning classes for four-

year-olds were housed in the primary wing and two competent new teachers were added to the staff. Working toward the second goal of making learning important and enjoyable called for deep-down reexaminations on the part of every teacher of what he was doing and why. It called for changes, not simply in attitudes and testimonies, but in daily, hourly habits and routines. It required energy and the courage of one's confusions. And, of course, willingness, even desire, to change on the part of teachers is only the beginning. Between that happy stage of teacher readiness and the point where children who were once apathetic and indifferent become equally energized and stimulated to learn lies a whole lot of on-the-job, trial-and-error learning of technique. What is surprising is not that the first year was hard but that nearly all the teachers, in very individual ways and at different times and impulses, did indeed take off in new directions. You can read details of what happened in subsequent chapters. But here let us summarize the outward signs of change, the more visible events in the school generally.

The August Workshop. Aside from orientation and planning sessions in the spring, involving university and school personnel and outside consultants, the first full opportunity for teachers and participants to interact came in the four-week workshop which preceded school's opening. The first half of each day was spent in rather formal study of such topics as language development in pre-school children, linguistic theories, surveys of language arts programs and materials, developmental and corrective reading instruction, and the construction and use of informal reading tests. In the afternoons, the Heman Street teachers worked individually on self-selected projects, with university personnel serving as consultants. Since at that time the teachers' first concern was with reading instruction, the lion's share of time and emphasis probably went in that direction, but many other interests were developed. For example, there was time to observe in the pre-school classes for the three- and four-year-olds which were getting underway at the same time as the workshop.

Miss Elizabeth Kelly, principal in Prince George's County, Maryland, spent a day at the workshop, describing innovations at Gaywood and Candlewood Schools, such as non-grading, cross-age grouping, team planning, learning centers and independent study, flexible time schedules, continuous individual diagnosis and consequent multi-level instruction in all subjects. Miss Anne Ward, Instructional Specialist at the Porter School in Syracuse, demonstrated and discussed Individually Prescribed Instruction as it has been implemented at Porter to teach beginning reading, particularly decoding skills. Siegfried Englemann demonstrated the Bereiter-Englemann system of early language training for the disadvantaged, using children from the pre-kindergarten summer classes. In addition, several of the Heman Street teachers and visiting teachers made special presentations.

Orientation to the community and to the school district was an important phase of the workshop. Participants studied the

cultural and political forces in the community, the tax structure, occupational patterns, the industries, commercial enterprises, streets and homes of the city, as well as demographic information on the area's residents. They visited the instructional materials center of the school district and toured the new Woodland Elementary School, which would open in the fall and would be used for comparative studies of the Heman Street population.

A Long, Slow Start. Although considerable momentum had been gained in the August workshop, the opening of school in September brought with it a diffusion of interests and a consequent lack of focus on the main goals of the project. Under the pressure of day-to-day demands, experienced teachers tended to fall back into familiar routines. For the novices, the main effort was to establish routines, to get to know their pupils, to "maintain order," and to win respect as a teacher. It was not surprising that the implementation of a language-centered curriculum should slip farther and farther down on the list of "things to be done."

The workshop had offered lots of opportunities to hear about new ideas, to read about them and discuss them, and sometimes even to see them demonstrated. But there had not been sufficient time to absorb them, nor structure them, nor to turn theories into practices. Any extensive classroom implementation called for unremitting hours of planning, of further delving into theory, of search for materials, and the construction of new materials where none could be found. In the rush hours of September and October, implementation could not be both immediate and extensive.

So there was a good deal of fumbling and misunderstanding in those first few months. When teachers were invited to help shape a new curriculum, they held back, perhaps waiting for stronger direction from the EPDA personnel. When it became apparent that the teachers were not going to be told what to do, their initial reaction was to question the competence of the EPDA staff and the value of the project. Responding to this reaction, the EPDA staff, too, reverted to behaviors they had used before and spent most of their time helping with small projects and worrying about lack of an overall design. These activities were largely productive; teaching methods were improved and new materials were introduced, but major innovations were postponed.

While it was not obvious at the time, progress was being made during this period of seeming uncertainty and regression to familiar patterns of behavior. The EPDA personnel and the Heman Street teachers were learning to work together and were establishing personal relationships based on mutual respect and interests. Individually and in groups, members of both staffs were learning more about team teaching, open schools, non-graded designs, and parent involvement in the curriculum. Of especial value at this time were trips to near-by schools to observe some of these practices. Through reading, discussing, observing, teachers and EPDA personnel began to identify and accept as their own those elements of a language-centered curriculum which they could adapt

to their gradually changing situations.

Cooperative endeavors during the first semester included the reorganization of the Mothers' Club into the Parent Teacher Organization, planning for parent discussion groups and work with parents as volunteer aides, the production of two assembly programs involving the whole school, the development of many small units of study in which speaking, role playing, and creative dramatics were emphasized, and the introduction of other language arts activities in which children were given freedom of choice and responsibility for carrying out their own ideas. Gradually, the number and variety of such activities increased, and when school reopened after the Christmas holidays, the whole staff were ready to undertake projects which came to fruition in the second semester.

Mini Courses. Perhaps the most dramatic and far-reaching innovation was initiated by the teachers themselves, as a result of first-hand observations, viewing films, and studying reports of experimental schools. What came to be known to the staff as "mini courses" was a scheme for cross-grade electives for pupils in grades three, four, and five, designed to meet children's and teachers' interests and to introduce experimentally a plan for greater flexibility and variety in instruction. As originally set up, every teacher planned two mini courses each to be offered daily for 45 minutes. Descriptions of the week's plans were presented to children the week before, and they indicated their first, second, and third choices. Only the afternoon sessions were devoted to mini courses. Around such topics as oceanography, coin collecting, the Civil War, simple machines, skits and dramas, the teachers organized instruction to allow for a maximum of experimenting, problem solving, "researching," the pursuit of individual reading interests, and the verbalizing of experience through talking and writing. The mini courses were viewed as wholly experimental, were modified considerably during the spring semester, and evaluated very informally. For a fuller report, see pages 65 to 78.

Continuous In-Service. The regular Wednesday afternoon faculty meetings were turned into in-service sessions. On most days, the teachers in grades three to five worked on plans for the mini courses while the pre-school, kindergarten, first and second grade teachers, under Dr. Kidson's guidance, prepared materials and exchanged ideas. From time to time, at the teachers' request, consultants were invited to speak to the whole group on topics such as grouping plans and evaluating pupil progress, and in the spring four afternoon workshops were devoted to (1) teaching basic reading skills; (2) oral language activities; (3) language in the science curriculum; (4) educating the imagination. From each workshop participating teachers developed a related classroom activity, and with the assistance of the EPDA staff tried it out and described it in written reports for their colleagues. (For examples of these reports, see pages 39 to 50.) Demonstration lessons by outside

consultants were always welcomed by the teachers and contributed significantly to their understandings of the dynamics of language in the classroom.

The best of the in-service work, however, generally took place in the classrooms as teachers and EPDA staff members sought solutions to specific problems, and sometimes in the coffee room when articulate people got together to probe each other's attitudes, theories, convictions, or simply to pick each other's brains for teaching ideas.

The Pre-school. In many ways the pre-school classes proved one of the most effective elements of the program. Staffed by two young teachers who were confident, relaxed, and organized, the classes demonstrated daily opportunities for active oral language development through games, role playing, arts and crafts, exploring the environment, dance, miming, and the like. More than any other classes, the pre-school recruited and made good use of volunteer parent aides. At the beginning of each month a calendar was sent home and mothers were requested to sign up in advance to work one or more days in the classes. Parents have contributed generously to equipping the pre-school, helping with field trips, and supplying treats for special occasions. In evening sessions, fathers constructed children's cubbies and clothes closets.

Coffee mornings with parents were also very constructive. About once a month, when the children went on field trips, mothers and some fathers would gather in the comfortable pre-school rooms as the children left. Meetings would begin very informally, with parents exchanging social chat, getting to know each other and the children's school surroundings. They would inspect the children's work on display, investigate the toys and learning materials and various projects. Then they would settle down to a film or a talk concerning educational issues or aspects of child development, contributed by the EPDA staff or a visiting specialist. These sessions would always be followed by discussions through which the parents were able to relate to their own thoughts and problems the issues that had been raised. Then they would welcome the children and teachers as they returned from the field trip and talk with them about the morning's excitements, thus building a bridge between school and home.

Parent Involvement. Above the pre-school, parents were also gradually absorbed into more of the school's activities. Volunteer parent aides have already been mentioned. The new Parent Teacher Organization examined a different phase of the curriculum at each of its monthly meetings. In addition, a plan for parent discussion groups was initiated by the first grade teachers. Attendance was excellent at these meetings which featured informal coffee periods, classroom visits, demonstrations of special materials

for teaching reading, on one occasion a talk by the school psychologist, and on another discussion with the school social worker.

Use of the Library. The school has an attractive library, with fairly adequate resources including popular contemporary authors, magazines, reference works, filmstrips, and some recordings. During the first half of the year, voluntary use of the library was insignificant. There were many problems surrounding the librarian's definition of her role and whether or not she should share teachers' extra-class responsibilities. She resigned in late winter, about the time that the mini courses were getting into full swing. Some of the effects of the mini courses and of individualized reading programs in the classrooms began to be seen in the increased voluntary use of the library. By spring children were using the library for their own purposes, often for "research" but also to pursue individual interests and "just to read" for pleasure.

Retrospect and Prospect

This EPDA project was designed for a three-year period in which two related goals are to be accomplished. This report is chiefly on progress toward the first goal: to develop a language-centered curriculum in which children from culturally disadvantaged backgrounds are given the best possible opportunities to master the tools of learning while at the same time they are growing in the arts of living. Put another way: the philosophy of the language-centered curriculum as interpreted by the Heman Street project staff is that skills acquisition contributes to personal growth and that instruction in skills need not impede the education of the imagination or the development of feelings.

Less is said in this report about the second goal: to prepare inexperienced master's candidates to become competent, sensitive teachers for similarly disadvantaged children in the schools of megalopolis; and to give leadership training to doctoral candidates who will become teachers of teachers. The chapters that follow are written by these students and in themselves are evidence of how these candidates fared. There seems little reason to doubt that the prospective teachers' daily experiences with pupils and teachers in the Heman Street School greatly strengthened the learnings which they acquired in their university courses even though the language-centered curriculum was emerging slowly, even painfully, during their apprenticeship. As for the doctoral candidates, they could not have had a better laboratory in which to learn how to work with teachers to bring about changes. Something of what they learned is included in the following paragraphs.

While our experiences at Heman Street confirm the values of on-the-job training, of "learning by doing" for teachers as well as pupils, they also reveal the limitations of this phase of teacher education. To "learn by doing" teachers need either a deep understanding of the theoretical bases for what they are doing or they need models

they can emulate. Of course, the presence of both theoretical bases and practical models would change behavior faster and more permanently than emphasizing either one, but we found it impossible to achieve both on all fronts of language development during a single school year. Because the Heman Street teachers had more background in reading pedagogy and theory than in any of the other language arts, though much of this came from basal reader manuals and was insufficient, they were more nearly ready to initiate change in reading instruction than in the other areas.[1] Even so, they needed time to study reading theory further so that they could make fundamental rather than superficial changes in their approaches to reading instruction.

Aside from their largely self-induced knowledge of reading skills instruction, these teachers had had very little pre-service training in, or knowledge of, language development. Even with limited backgrounds in oral language, children's literature, drama, listening, and writing, teachers can learn to improve specific practices, especially if they have models to go by, but they need thorough knowledge of theoretical bases if they are to forge these practices into a unified, wholistic experience for children from kindergarten through grade five.

The models which consultants and demonstration teachers can provide are piecemeal. In their struggle to understand the idea of a language-centered curriculum, the Heman Street teachers wanted to observe a whole school thus oriented. Of course, the purpose of this project is to provide eventually such a model because they *are* rare. Teachers who are charged with creating a new design, without being able to observe a whole-school model, have even greater needs for a theoretical framework to which they can attach individual practices which they may observe or read about or devise.

Where are on-the-job teachers to find the time for this broad study of theory which we believe must support consultant-assisted on-the-job training? For this project, the best answer seemed to lie in summer workshops, and in 1970 a second August workshop extended the experiences discussed earlier in this report. But in other situations, and in this one as well, additional solutions must be found. For one thing, time for study during the school year, within the teacher's working day, must be supported by any administration that hopes for important change.

Because of the foregoing considerations, the three-year schedule proposed for this project seems, if anything, optimistic. But the progress of the first year seems to be in the right direction.

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[1] The phrase "Heman Street teachers" in these generalizations refers, of course, to a mythical average. One really cannot generalize about a group of twenty teachers whose wide differences are indicated by the fact that five were beginners, nine were new to the school, one was in her 70th year, and several were candidates for advanced degrees with many years of successful teaching to their credit.

Since our goal is not a "paper curriculum," we expect teachers to experiment as they can, making real changes in specific practices, gradually accumulating these and welding them into a total curriculum in which language growth is the central force.

As we enter the second and third years of the project, we are strengthening the partnership between EPDA participants and classroom teachers. In some of the teams, direction will come from the latter; in those involving experienced doctoral candidates, the relationship is that of consultant and teacher sharing equally the task of improving services to pupils. In all the teams, members alternate between demonstrating and observing.

One modification of the project in 1970-71 is the expansion of the pre-school to include three-year-olds and to train paraprofessionals drawn from the community.

As the whole school moves toward expansion of language, as children have more opportunities for talking, role playing, dramatizing, questioning, discussing, observing, researching, reporting, organizing, expressing ideas and feelings in writing of various kinds, we shall attempt to record and analyze what is happening to individuals in all of the language arts and skills. We believe, however, that teachers must be free to try new ideas, succeed or fail with them, discard or retain them, in a period of free experimentation preceding the time when the practices they select must be subjected to the controls of evaluative research. We cannot expect that growth in language development will be so rapid and dramatic that it will be picked up immediately by standardized tests (as in reading) that measure only a part of our objectives.

One word more. Accountability is as much on our minds these days as openness and freedom. We do not believe that the concepts are incompatible. But having seen the effects on teachers and children of a narrow accounting of skills acquisition in just one phase of language development, we would urge a concept of accountability that measures not only learning but zest for learning.

PART ONE

THEORIES INTO PRACTICES

ONE PERSON'S VIEW OF LANGUAGE

IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by Christine San Jose

I

Elementary schools are such public places. There are people everywhere, of one size or another. You pack the mob off to a special, ease into the peace of an empty corridor, and "Hi Miss/Mrs./Mr. Whatever-name-you-answer-to-in-that-situation! Can you come to our puppet show? Me and Danny . . . etc., etc." "Sounds terrific! I'll have to see if I . . . etc., etc." You slip into the coffee room (tuning out the hoedown from the gym and the film commentary from upstairs and Mrs. Y's spelling review next door and the pair of second-graders whispering and giggling past on their way to the office), pick up the morning paper - "Hey there, Whatever-your-coffee-room-name-is, howyadoin? - Got a minute? My class was wondering if . . . etc., etc." You're involved. The ideas fly back and forth, coalesce, collapse, reform. In fact it'd be nice if you could expend all your mental energies on what's being said, and didn't have to reserve some for watching his reactions and responding in tune. You can never be quite sure how far he wants your honest views and how far he's really just asking for support. Still, it's usually worth the effort to see what he's getting at. Must remember to jot some of this down and mull it over. But by now your free period's almost down the drain and you haven't had a minute to yourself. "We'll have to get together again on this (edging to the door), work out the details. Got to run off some dittos. (Escaping) It's a terrific idea -- you're a marvel --"

You poke around the mess of dittomasters next to the machine where there's everything but the one you want and by the time you've spotted it over the other side of the storeroom your oaths are getting repetitious. There are words to describe people who dump things like that (racketting off the copies) and you use them. So by the time you've finished you're almost civilized enough to enjoy the quiet. Your eye falls on a language book you hadn't noticed before. Attractive modern binding, cheery illustrations, not entirely unrealistic stories. Bit of poetry here and there. And, neatly set out, the Rules. Enumerated, underlined, italicized, framed even, cross-referenced for your convenience: you can't miss them. Capital letters, periods, remember to indent . . . Useful enough, have to be learned sometime. So why - and here perhaps I am embarking upon a personal problem and should drop the assumption that the experience is shared - why do I feel uneasy,

apprehensive? I am legitimately enjoying a few minutes alone, quietly furthering my professional growth with this apparently attractive, competent book: and it has set stirring in me that sort of deep, uncomfortable uncertainty you wake up with on bad days. "1. Did you start your story with an interesting first sentence? 2. Did you use rich, exciting words?" . . . "Now in this chapter you must learn to write descriptions, first by using phrases and then by using sentences." Is the book making me uncomfortable because I don't know all the rules? The ones about punctuation and the like don't worry me, I know where I am with them. But all this exhortation to watch out for every word I speak or write, this implication coming through loud and clear that if I do as the book says then, and only then, will I be using language properly . . . Or perhaps then and only then will I be using language? I don't know. It doesn't say, this book, nor many many others, what language is. But *they* know, those people who write the books; they must, they hand out the rules. And talking and writing isn't something you can take or leave. You might get through life with only a shaky notion of geography or history or math even. But the better you talk and write the better you get on all around, everybody knows that. Or at least talking; you've got to talk; it isn't you if you can't talk. So you've just got to learn The Rules.

By the time I've leafed through a couple more language books in the storeroom I'm beginning to feel like a character in Kafkaland: lost, threatened, eager to obey and yet all the time in my ignorance offending. "Idiot!" says commonsense. "You've got through okay all these years, haven't you? If you'd been really hopeless, surely somebody would have spotted it and they'd never have let you in here to teach. And you've got friends who seem to understand you; let alone your family. And you get along with your colleagues, working things out together . . . " So with my private self somewhat relieved I quickly put back the books where they came from and walk out to my public being.

The question that comes into my mind as I step into the corridor --

"Hi Bob, how's it going?"

"Oh we'll survive I guess."

-- is, of course: what happens to the third grader when he opens up his language book? Or the fourth or fifth or sixth grader? His public self will most probably proceed as directed. Everybody else does. You can see it all around you. That's school. His public self will work his way through Building his English and Mastering his Language. He'll indent and work on vivid phrases and stamp out cliches. And he'll work on something some books call organizational skills where you try to sort out a bunch of stuff you probably never understood in the first place (according to yet more book-decreed Rules) and couldn't care less about.

And his private self? What has this "language" to do with him? If he recognizes enough of it to make his way through, knowing that if

he plays along with this manner of doing things he's likely to end up with a good job, it probably won't cause much trouble. (One suspects there's more than one of our prominent citizens around who hasn't heard so much as a squeak from anything like his private self in years.) But what if his private self is lost in this world where it doesn't know the rules, and what it's learned of language so far seems to be more hindrance than help? How long before out of bewilderment, frustration, boredom, or just plain commonsense, he opens the book as directed but keeps his mind firmly shut?

Mrs. L. bears down on me.

"There you are! Your kids are screaming their heads off."

"Oh - oh I didn't think I was late - they must have come back early --"

"I thought you must be sick or something."

Please, Mrs. L. Please don't look at me with quite that distaste. I heard you're having a worrying time with your son and I'm truly sorry, but please don't fight me all the time like this, it doesn't help. What can I say to you, a personal message from me to you? Perhaps if I could find an exciting first sentence, fashion a vivid, original, creative phrase . . .

"Okay kids! That's enough! Cool it! Is this the way you . . . etc., etc."

And so on and on and on, all day, day after day, in school and out. Our public selves, our private selves, greeting, thinking, reading, feeling, noting, wondering, listening, trying to sort out in our minds, trying to sort out with each other . . . And through it all, an inseparable, quintessential part of our being: language. In just this very simplified account of a typical person's typical half hour in a typical day: how many different uses of language are there? where and how do the different uses blend? and separate and blend again in varying combinations? how many recognizably different types of language are there? can we sort out any main categories of usage? main categories of type? can we discern any use or type as more valuable than any other? what is the part played by nonverbal thought or signals? the relationship between the nonverbal and the verbal? to what extent is the language used predetermined by context? does the question of "accepted usage" arise in this account?

And to wind up this little mental exercise, perhaps the two biggest questions of all: can we separate the denotative language from the connotative? can we separate language and personality? This is not a programmed language course; you are not absolutely required to carry out the exercise above and determine your answers before you can proceed! But I think each of the questions is worth a little thought. And I think they're worth it in this context not because of the particular answers any of us might come up with; but because in this way we are likely to find ourselves grappling with the very nature of language, and with how we use language to live. And while we're grappling, we might begin

to consider: how many of these aspects of language do we take into account in school? How many should we? How many could we? And if there is much we leave out even of the language in this very simplistic account, how much more are we leaving out of the language in the children's lives as they are living them in all their depth and complexity? These are not rhetorical questions, but rather those we must genuinely, personally ask ourselves if we are ever to implement a language curriculum that will serve the whole child and not just a fragment of his social role. Well, that's nothing new. Helping the child to language to live by, serving the whole child: one is embarrassed to be discovered reiterating something said so often before. But perhaps my small concrete example and exercise have at least raised doubts as to whether we are in fact in matters of language serving the whole child. And if, in addition, the example and exercise have made seem huge and unwieldy the questions of what and how we should and could be teaching, I can only plead malice aforethought. Anybody thinking for one moment that "language" is a biddable beast ends up eaten by his words.

So much for indicating the particular neck of the educational woods that I think we should be in.

II

Now, I suppose, it behooves me to try to provide some sort of map. Before I venture on even the first presumption, however, let me make one thing clear. What follows obviously cannot pretend to be more than one person's preliminary sketch. All additions and disagreements welcome. It was precisely in the hope of eliciting them that I have taken so long to get to this point.

A cheering place to begin is on common ground. So we might as well say, first, that language is a system of learned arbitrary vocal symbols used by human beings. We had better not add "for communication," as many books do. Communication, as we have seen already, is only one of its multitudinous uses. Some reservations might be made about "vocal"; I have some myself; but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it. So thus far we probably all agree. Right here, however, comes a parting of the ways.

It wouldn't much serve our present purposes to try to distinguish exactly which prestigious language scholar, past or present, follows exactly which path, since the branch paths intermingle and crossborrowings abound. But we can make out the main divergence.

On the one hand are the people concerned primarily with underlying characteristics. They don't so much poke around in language as we speak it and listen to it and read and write it, as try to work out what holds good for language in general. In the past, this wasn't too nervewracking an occupation. You studied the grammar of classical Greek and Latin, which everyone knew were wonderfully superior languages, treasure-houses of human thought. Then you worked out a grammar for English along the same

lines. Not surprisingly, living English didn't always fit the static classical pattern. But the way out of that one wasn't hard to find. Where the English didn't fit it was due to unfortunate irregularities that should never have been there anyway; so either you squeezed and stretched and doctored the English until it did fit, or you just left out the recalcitrants as beneath your notice. It reminds one of the man who went back to his tailor in his new suit to show him how the left sleeve didn't fit too well and the tailor said, "Well just droop your shoulder a bit and, see, it looks fine." So the man did but then he noticed the right leg was a bit longer than the left so he went back to the tailor and the tailor said, "Well just bend your knee a bit like this and, see, you couldn't ask for a finer fit." And then it was back with the shoulders and the tailor had him hunch his back a little; and so on and on until one day the man was limping, hunching, bunching his way down the street and somebody came up to him and begged for the name of his tailor. "You want the name of *my* tailor?" "I sure do. If he can fit a cripple like you he can fit anybody."

This approach was still very much the order of the day even into this century. And the shrewd reader will have surmised that I wouldn't have indulged in an absurd story to make the point if I thought it was totally a thing of the past, totally banished from today's enlightened world. Anyway, back to the turn of the century. Scholars were discovering more about the early forms of our language, delving into Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, studying its Germanic relations, finding patterns even within the supposed irregularities, and English was acquiring more prestige. But still the basic idea was that there was this language to learn and it came with a whole lot of rules; and you had better learn to use them, as set down, if you wanted to use the language properly.

Obviously this approach has considerable attractions. It's reassuring to be told that something you have to learn is thus and so and be handed the book of rules. You might be irked by them sometimes, but at least you know where you are. It's even more reassuring when you have to teach that something to somebody else. The task may be hard and long and carry a heavy responsibility but it's not overwhelming. When you know where you are with something, you have a good idea where to begin teaching it and where you want to get to.

The scholars, however, the researchers, the people in the field, found it less and less valid to view language as some static entity lying down quietly under rules. We were getting further from Athens and Rome, we realized that we had lots of good things that in fact the Greeks didn't have a word for, and if English didn't fit the old pattern then maybe the pattern was wrong. And by now the anthropologists were bringing home for inspection all sorts of languages we'd never seen before. Plenty of interesting old manuscripts had come to light, stone inscriptions had been unearthed and decoded. But these were the relics of cultures long gone. The anthropologists were bringing them back alive. And it was clear beyond all dispute that no matter how "primitive" we might dub the civilizations they came from, these living languages were of a rich complexity that showed up any language rules so far as hopelessly inadequate. The anthropologists' problem when they tried to translate into English was

not just that for several things in the native culture our culture, not having them,had no word. It was, much more significantly, that to convey the full meaning of the native words, phrases, structures, they had to describe whole situations. Sometimes a word would have this force, sometimes in another situation it would have that. Sometimes its meaning would change according to who used it, to whom. Sometimes an object would be called one thing, sometimes another, according to the context in which it was found. This bit of language was used to convey such-and-such a thought, that bit functioned (in Malinowski's words) "as a link in concerted human activity, as a piece of human behavior . . . a mode of action and not an instrument of reflection."

Language, simply, is part and parcel of human lives. And it can no more be neatly packaged and labeled than can our human existence. I am not for one moment saying, either of language or life, that there are no discernible patterns, no pointers and guides. Of course there are, and not the least of them are the fruits of twentieth century scholarship. Once you can diagnose your insufferable neighbor as a bad case of inferiority complex it's not quite so hard on your blood pressure. It is just that however scholarly, ingenious, sound, imaginative, complex -- and more! -- may be the guidelines we draw up, once you're dealing with the human element you're always stuck with a bit more than you'd bargained for. Computer dating will never be one hundred per cent successful until they're arranging dates for computers. And language studies have a long way to go before they can tell me what to say to Mrs. L. when I'm sorry she's having a worrying time with her son but I wish for both of us that she wouldn't take it out on me.

Those concerned with underlying characteristics, then, realized that they had to work at a level much deeper than they'd found themselves at before. Some of them today are excavating way down into the fundamental characteristic, man's innate capacity to produce language. Psycholinguists are hunting the fundamental mechanisms; philosophers are investigating man as the only creature capable of symbolism; grammarians are laboring with theories that they hope will, in their final form, stand firm in the light of all the seeming irregularities, as well as the regularities, not only of English but of all languages. Insofar as the layman can see what's going on in this multiplicity of research, it looks as if eventually it's going to provide us with significant clues about our human nature.

The serious scholars are obviously not coming up with "rules" to apply to the language we actually speak, hear, read and write. Just the opposite: they must record the realities of that language if their underlying theories are ever going to prove valid. They most adamantly eschew any value judgments such as citing one country's language as "better" than another's, or one dialect as more linguistically "correct."

Unfortunately, there are plenty of brand new textbooks around that give quite a different impression. You can find late copyright books with rigid models and diagrams in them and flat assertions that English sentences are made thus and so. You'd better read the preface, which promises you the joys of modern scholarship, because otherwise you just might think you're in the temple of the old gods of grammar, not the new. And that

would be disastrous for the author's image, because he knows the accumulation of evidence that proves irrefutably how rapidly formal grammar is forgotten, and how much less than nothing it contributes to children's improvement in language usage. These new books are only to be expected, I suppose. Rules, we've already said, are comforting to teachers if not to pupils. And it's a temptation to authors and publishers to try to translate the latest fruits of research into exercises and classroom practices. The results are popular. And why not? The teachers are assured they're doing a great job. Of course, the children may be short-changed, but one gathers from the preface to one of the most popular of these books that we don't need to worry much about that. It is unfortunate, the author admits, that the children have already mastered complex structures in their everyday language whereas they will be able to understand the grammar of only very simple ones. Never mind. We'll just give them the very simple ones. And we'll give them the forms of written English, he says, because the grammar works best with literary forms. So a large part of the book is given over to drill in tedious language patterns of the sort the child rarely uses, and the highlights are blow-by-blow analyses of less than stunning nineteenth century poetry. It's rather teaching the child to cross a quiet country lane, with the odd horse clipclopping by, when his everyday route lies through city rush-hour intersections.

Please don't dismiss this as an inapposite tirade. It seems to me a prime responsibility of both scholars and publishers to provide the teacher with information and tools of the highest quality. And by quality, need I add, I don't mean multicolor illustrations; I mean intellectual integrity. This would by no means exclude the exciting new hypotheses about underlying characteristics of language. But the material that did justice to these hypotheses would show them to be more akin to mathematics, say, or physics than to language as we use it. And we would see that where they do approach our language it is in the realm of logic. That's an important realm, obviously. But, equally obviously, it's very far from being the whole of our lives or the whole of our language.

Grammar is one path, then, of language investigation.

The other is more concerned with language on the level at which we use it. Some of the most stimulating work here stems from inquiry into the problems posed by the anthropologists. It was in fact an anthropologist, Malinowski, who first used the phrase "context of situation", which crops up repeatedly in one form or another in subsequent linguistic research. He made the point that different situations dictate not just different forms of language, but quite different kinds of language. We have seen earlier how he distinguished, for example, between language as a "mode of action" and language as a "reflection of thought". Another kind of language he termed "phatic communion", by which he meant "a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words", where language again "does not function as a means of transmission of thought". So when you're asked in the corridor "Howyadoin?", an answer in Cherokee wouldn't be much further from the language required for that situation than would an account of how, as a matter of fact, you are truly doing. Then again there's the language of poetry. That takes a bit of practice before you get the best results, whether you're speaking, reading,

writing or listening to it, whether you're concerned primarily with poetry you produce yourself or with somebody else's. And what about the language they write your income tax form instructions in? That looks like double Dutch the first time through. So here we are, back again at "language to live by", "serving the whole child". But perhaps this time around, in this context, we can begin to see these phrases as more than humanistic wishful thinking. For one thing, we are learning more and more about these different kinds of language. We have far more equipment for recording them than we ever had before, and increasingly more sophisticated methods of analysis are being devised. In the past, of course, we had plenty of writing to study, especially literary genres. We had verbatim accounts of great speeches, Cicero's included. We had a good idea of the general lines of attack of successful raconteurs. We knew the formulae of polite conversation. But knowledge of this kind didn't help much with the language questions we were asking back at the beginning, questions relating to language as we all know it and use it. In fact, knowledge of uses of language was limited -- but sufficient for some people to produce another kind of textbook following this language path. Textbooks like these were in abundance in the storeroom, too. These are the books that decree we have to begin with a vivid first sentence, turn our backs on cliche, construct novel phrases. They added a zillion other Rules. But now we have better resources for studying language than textbooks of either kind. Children can study on tape, or in transcription, lots and lots of different stories, accounts, anecdotes, from lots and lots of different sources, told by real people to real people in their own natural context. One might conclude from listening to real people that many of the most successful speakers never went near the rulebook. Think how even better they would have performed if they had! -- or think how much worse. We can eavesdrop electronically now, pick up how children really talk with each other when grown-ups aren't around. We can categorize their vocabulary, analyze their sentences for length, complexity of structure, plot some sort of general sequential development -- which we see varies tremendously according to which of their languages they are using. We can catch the infant's babbling, and amass the babbling of this infant and many more, then compare and contrast. We can check our hypotheses concerning, for example, whether the young child is apparently verbalizing his thought processes or not. Even more, we can record a picture of what's going on: and now we find a contrapuntal meaning to what is being said in the raised and lowered eyebrows, the incipient stretch or hunch!

One hears a question in the air: So what?! What's the point of knowing, say, just how children throw their repetitious and inane insults around at each other, or giggle their way through taboo word sharings? Or suppose we take it on trust that it's of some use to the researchers, what possible connection have these areas of language with school? The answer to these very understandable questions contains (I happen to believe) exciting implications for all of us working in education -- and that includes the children!

The way into the answer begins somewhere here. After decades of painstaking fieldwork and ingenious experimental research we are finally beginning to get some picture of human perceptions and thought processes. We have always known that different people see things differently, but the facts and figures far surpass what we would have predicted. We flatly

disbelieve what we see before us if it doesn't fit in with our scheme of things. Observers in the experiment built around a trapezoidal window, for example, are so unused to anything other than rectangular windows that they interpret what they see as an ordinary window in perspective. They will believe that they see one piece of solid matter passing through another, that all kinds of black magic are going on, rather than relinquish this interpretation. So many experiments have confirmed this, and so much of the clinical psychologists' experience, that perhaps we should amend the common phrase to "I saw it with my own mind". It is hardly surprising, then, to find that children who have the language for, say, a certain shape, can pick out that shape among others much more accurately than children who have not. In other words, our growing ability to sort out what's what in our environment is inextricably bound up with our language development. One step on from this is evidence of the strong connection between being able to talk about the principle of performing a task (i.e., a task requiring mental organization rather then special physical endowments) and being able to do one like it. So language is clarifying each experience as it is met; and is an integral part of the patterns of experience building up in the mind. Thus, as the growing human being faces increasingly complex experiences, his ability to cope with them, and then to use these experiences to help him cope with others that follow, will depend to no small extent on whether he has the language to maintain an efficient filing system in his head.

Let's stick with the analogy of the filing system for a while because in addition to being an image that helps us grasp what's going on up there in our heads it is in fact appropriate to the neuro-psychological system; it really does work rather like a filing system. So we can see that if we are to bring to bear our previous learning on new situations -- whether they involve mastering new information or assessing the trustworthiness of a new acquaintance or a new car -- we stand the best chance of proceeding wisely if we can in fact refer to relevant issues in our entire past experience, compare and contrast cross-references over the whole field. Our filing system, in other words, should contain references to our whole lives as *precise* and as *comprehensive* as possible. I hope this doesn't sound like putting the teacher in the position of the mother with a new baby who's freed from grandma's tyranny only to hold the modern baby book in such awe that she daren't take a step for fear of warping the delicate little psyche! But seriously, I think we have to consider in depth the possible consequences of exiling from school the various aspects of the children's lives, with their concomitant language, that we usually do. For example, in the preface of one of the books referred to earlier, the author says that naturally he isn't going to deal with the child's chatting with his comrades, which he can do without our assistance. I would suggest that this point-of-view neglects two important points. The first is that the more precisely and comprehensively the child chats with his comrades the more efficiently he is building up his filing system, storing for future use impressions of people and relationships and himself among them. Second, it is on this command of language that more complex masteries are subsequently built. Any building that does not pay great attention to the foundations, and that inseparably means to the land beneath as well, is a risky proposition. Therefore, we might very well provide in class, not too infrequently, the

context for absorbing chat; and build on it accordingly.

Perhaps this example also helps clarify the difference between the forms often taken by the older humanistic advice to teach language that would serve the whole child and what is advocated here. Before, the idea was to introduce the child to some preferred model of performance and encourage practice to emulate the model. This leaves the door wide open both to prescription in teaching and to outer-directed areas of concern. It leads, that is to say, to an emphasis on the specifically social uses of language, and often, with that, to considerable preoccupation with socially accepted forms. Here, the emphasis is always on taking into account the child's already complex language masteries, being appreciative of his especially robust languages of magic, for example, and of ritual, of excoriation, of self-assertion, of symbolized fear. It becomes obvious, doesn't it, that there's small place here for prescription; that there is, rather, constant enrichment of the classroom from the child's own living; that living and learning in school and out are a spiral of mutual enrichment. There are certain mechanical conventions to get straight; but for the rest, language sessions should surely be as much a time of learning for the teacher as for the class.

I won't pursue this point (this fervent hope!) further here, as I think it will be clearer in the following section of this paper, where I suggest more concretely how this view of language might be implemented. But it does become clear that the classroom teacher is in fact in the vanguard of research. I said earlier that we are beginning to amass for analysis records of the different kinds of language in use, in their context of situation. We need all the perceptive observers in the field that we can get. Much of the most significant language research in recent years, of vital importance to education, has sprung out of analysis of what children have actually said. We are breaking through to an understanding of how children can start out with equal abilities, yet some will go from strength to strength in school while others will fall further and further behind until, defeated, they drop out. There is strong evidence that this is all tied in with their ability -- or lack of it -- to use their understanding of their own kinds of language to arrive at an understanding of the abstract languages of learning in the upper grades.

It would be of trememdous value not only to themselves but to the whole profession if teachers could furnish detailed linguistic documentation of lessons where they really got a concept across, or lessons where for all their preparation they just didn't. Such documentation would analyze the teacher's language, and the children's, the language of the teacher's questions and the language of the responses that the questions elicit. To what areas of his life does it appear from his language that the child is referring? Are you trying to get across the principles of the unheard alarm clock ringing in the vacuumized bell jar while he's still hung up on trying to tell about the time his Dad didn't hear the alarm and all that that entailed? Is it your subject matter he isn't getting? Your sentence structure? Your vocabulary? Are you maybe missing something relevant that he's saying because he isn't expressing it in the usual language of your experiment? And then you might well analyze what you can of the child's home language. Does this indicate

areas of language that the school could be building on? Or areas of language that the school cannot take for granted in the home, and should therefore be teaching?

In the first section, as I said, I indicated what part of the forest I think we're in. In this second section I have tried to explain what sort of map I think we need. In the following, final section I shall suggest a few lines we might sketch in on that map.

III

Our aim is to help the child develop the most precise and comprehensive language of which he is capable. Now we have to subdivide that aim into specific areas in the hope of perceiving just what we should be covering, step by step. This is a tall order; and before offering any suggestions I must stress that much of what follows is necessarily tentative, with great gaps in the thinking. But with linguistic research on the one hand furnishing increasing proof of the inseparability of language development and personal growth, and educational surveys on the other revealing the gross inadequacies in current language arts practices, surely it is time we tried to draw an inclusive, practical map.

It has been emphasized from the beginning that language work is irrelevant if it does not develop out of the child's own self. Let us look, then, at what this child, as he sits in our class, is made up of. We can hardly miss his physical existence: if he hasn't been moving around for a while he's probably wriggling or drooping or turning or yawning; his ears are open to the airplane outside, to his neighbor's whisper; his eye is suddenly distracted by some passing something or other. The sensory-motor child in his probably unnatural habitat. Then there are his emotions: how he feels in general, how he feels about himself today, this particular minute; how he feels in connection with the world of people (singly and in groups and in masses) around him. And then there's his mind, trying to make sense of it all: the crowding concrete evidence, puzzles, obstacles, and the glimpse of an abstract idea. Of course, as we have considered already, these three elements are in constant interaction. But as long as we bear this in mind, they may prove useful demarcations of areas of concern. And what are the main properties of language, of that which we are hoping to help him develop as an indispensable adjunct to development of himself? Our thinking thus far leads to an intriguing parallel. Language has a physical existence: it has sounds and often gestures of some kind. It has an emotive element, which may concern mainly ourselves, that is, the expression of some inner feeling, or may mainly concern the feelings of others, to be evoked or invoked or even manipulated. And thirdly there is the cognitive element of language, that with which we label the particles of our existence and organize them into relationships and puzzle over them and extend their significance by rearranging them in new patterns.

Since our concern as language teachers is the bringing together of the child's various properties with the properties of language, let us

take these as axes in a double-entry table, as below.

			LANGUAGE						
			PHYSICAL	EMOTIVE		COGNITIVE			
			Sound, Para-Language, Kinesics	Self	Others	denote	organize	question	extend
PERSON	PHYSICAL	Senses							
		Movement							
	EMOTIONS	Self							
		Related to Others							
	THOUGHT	CONCRETE							
		ABSTRACT							

If our thinking so far is correct, the resultant cells should cover every aspect of person-language relationships. Let us now try out their practicability as indicators of specific areas of concern. Obviously, the cells won't be watertight. There's leakage, seepage, osmosis, capillary attraction, flooding --. But for now, let us see if we can determine, by looking at the axes of a cell, what language use mainly fits in there; and conversely, let us see if we can find the appropriate cell for whatever language use we think of.

Looking first at axes, let us begin with something that looks straightforward--for example, the cell determined by THOUGHT, CONCRETE on the PERSON axis and by COGNITIVE, DENOTE on the LANGUAGE axis. That surely is naming, labeling, of the concrete world around us. At kindergarten level it's "Does anyone know what this is?" as the more esoteric treasures of show and tell are presented. It's putting the name to objects you know, and learning the name of new objects as you come across them. This one of the most obvious examples of aiding perception by clarifying what you're looking for. It's learning the names of different trees and flowers and birds. Higher up the school it's increasingly the specialized vocabulary of geology or chemistry or whatever. It's recording information for your own use, or that of others, either by oral recitation of the facts or by writing down. This cell contains also <u>listening</u> to denotations--information--and <u>reading</u> it.

Now from where we are at the intersection of PERSON: THOUGHT, CONCRETE with LANGUAGE: COGNITIVE, DENOTE, let us glance to the top of this same language column, the intersection of PERSON: PHYSICAL/LANGUAGE: COGNITIVE, DENOTE. That is surely the labelling of sensations and movements, denotative, not emotionally expressive. This is where, for example, kindergarten children work at objective statements about their senses, where the teacher may well feel she is laying the cornerstones of scientific investigation. In this same language column, next personal row down, we would place the objective description of feelings. And at the bottom of this same language column we are at the objective statement of a concept. Let's go back to the top of the language column again, and this time trace back horizontally; that is, staying this time in the same personal category--the sensory-motor--but changing language properties. Immediately to the left is LANGUAGE: EMOTIVE, OTHERS; this cell is concerned with conveying to others not just the name of a sensation but a language recreation of the sensation itself. This is where you make your friends wince with a vivid account of the knife-sharp, blood-spurting pain of your skinned knee. (Describe the abrasion in the textbook language of COGNITIVE, DENOTE and you wouldn't get much sympathy). Immediately to the left of this, PERSON: PHYSICAL/LANGUAGE: EMOTIVE, SELF is where you might jot the catastrophe down in your own diary. You want it to be expressive enough to feel you've done yourself justice in putting down the nasty pain you felt, but after all you're not playing it for tears.

The cell to the left again is perhaps at first sight something of a teaser: the interaction of the physical element of language with the physical element of the person. Surely this is where we find onomatopeia and gestures, where we chant in chorus, or yell "It hurts!" Basic mime is here, too, the beginnings of drama.

Let's leave this top lefthand corner for the minute and just see what happens if we explore its opposite number, the bottom right. We were on the bottom row already, in LANGUAGE: COGNITIVE, DENOTE with statement of concept. Next cell to the right we're still in PERSON: THOUGHT, ABSTRACT, but have moved to LANGUAGE: COGNITIVE, ORGANIZE. This is presumably where we are organizing our abstract ideas. Next cell to the right we are analyzing or questioning these concepts and their alignments in hypotheses. And in the final righthand, lowest box, these have been rearranged into new hyoptheses, that is, extending into more complex concepts.

Suppose the children in your class are apparently just not able to build their arguments in pursuing some abstract decision one way or the other. They can't write them, nor talk about them, and they don't seem to understand the written and oral models you're giving them either. Maybe they can learn off pat the pro's and con's of some particular topic, but they can't line up and assess new material. It would seem pretty clear that they just haven't yet reached the requisite stage of mental growth. The table indicates related areas leading to this stage. In the same language column, one personal row up, for example, we find PERSONAL: THOUGHT, CONCRETE/LANGUAGE: COGNITIVE, EXTEND. This suggests that we might assess their competence in, say, their science experiments. Surely we would have to find this area pretty well consolidated before we could hope for any success in a parallel activity concerning abstractions. And if they're shaky here, we might trace that row back to the left, see how they're doing in questioning their concrete conclusions, or before that, in PERSONAL: THOUGHT, CONCRETE/LANGUAGE: COGNITIVE, ORGANIZE, how well can they sequence concrete operations. Or in the cell to the left before that, how well can they clearly denote the concrete anyway? In some subjects we might find the trouble had started right here, that they were getting into fearful confusions with their chemistry because they'd never really mastered the specialized vocabulary. Or to go back to the bottom righthand cell again, the one concerning the extension of abstract thought, we could trace back along the bottom row and see if the children could even denote abstractions in a way that really meant something to them.

Since we haven't looked into the emotive areas yet, let's take just one more example from there. Suppose you decide you want to do something about poetry. Maybe you read the children poems now and then, maybe you even have them write them from time to time; but you don't have them truly at home in this area, enjoying and creating as you wish they could. You have the children bring their favorite poems and you all read them and that's that. You have them write and they manage a bit of doggerel. Nothing is catching fire. Let's see where Poetry would come in on the table. Obviously PERSONAL: EMOTIONS, probably SELF/LANGUAGE: EMOTIVE, SELF and/or OTHERS. Again, let us look at the cells above and before this one. Taking the one above, PERSONAL: PHYSICAL/LANGUAGE: EMOTIVE, SELF: have you done much talking and writing lately that conveys sensations? Listened to, or read, any language of this kind? Follow the same PERSONAL: PHYSICAL and trace the language back into PHYSICAL also. Have you been miming sensations lately? Stretching and crouching and generally feeling in your blood and muscles who and where you are? Dancing? Have you been enjoying together any choral speech with a strong rhythm?

Now fill in that gap there to the left of the poetry cell, and below the PHYSICAL/PHYSICAL we have just been discussing. That lands us in PERSONAL: EMOTIONS/LANGUAGE: PHYSICAL. That must include mimed drama, non-verbal improvisation. Did you try any of that before you started your poetry? Moving to emotional music would seem one good place to start. The cadences of grief, say, are unmistakably akin, whether expressed through movement, or music, or a human cry, or through poetry that seeks to give words to it.

This example has been mainly in the SELF area of the emotional. Looking at relationships here to the areas of OTHERS, we find PERSONAL: EMOTIONS, SELF/LANGUAGE: EMOTIVE, OTHERS. That must be expressing our feelings not just to record them adequately for ourselves, or perhaps for friends who know us very well and tune in deeply to us, but so that we can convey the very emotion to others, recreate the experience even for people who do not know us. This obviously is a stage we shall hope to reach in poetry sessions with some of the children, though perhaps only with the older, more verbal ones.

Or there's PERSONAL: EMOTIONS, OTHERS. In LANGUAGE: PHYSICAL, I think this interaction is, say, the language of ritual, where the physical fact of the string of words means more than any emotional or cognitive meaning. This is where phatic communion comes in, where we exchange "Hi" or weather chat or often quite complicated sequences whose meaning nevertheless resides almost solely in the tone of voice and smiles exchanged. I think it's also where the standard/nonstandard dialect battle often rages, where we include by means of certain "accepted" physical sounds those whom our emotions have us feel to be one of us or exclude those we fear or envy or resent for whatever reason.

In PERSONAL: EMOTIONS, OTHERS/LANGUAGE: EMOTIVE, OTHERS I think we have story-telling--a direction we might like to follow related to a poetry session. I think exploring the SELF and OTHER areas in the table, in both PERSON and LANGUAGE, could be most revealing, raising some basic questions about language as communication, symbolic expression, persuasion, manipulation, the inner- and outer-directed characteristics of language. One last word on PERSON: EMOTIONS. Following it across horizontally to LANGUAGE: COGNITIVE, we surely come to literary criticism. That would seem to indicate that there's not much point in engaging our pupils in literary criticism until they know their way around in the areas this example has been discussing, poetry and other literature.

The teaching examples that we have been looking at do seem to indicate that at each grade level the table could be a useful guide. There is, however, one great danger in it that should be fully recognized. Even insofar as the format helps clarify this very complex subject, by the same token it also implies a compartmentalization more real than is actually so. It has already been stressed that the cells are not watertight. But more than that, in any language going on at any time there are likely to be elements from several different areas. Just as emotions and thoughts intertwine--and knot!--in the person, so language is frequently both cognitive and emotive simultaneously, and moreover a speaker will be sending out physically so many messages about himself that we may well find ourselves

disposed to agree or disagree long before we have considered what he has actually said! This table serves merely for a crude, vastly simplified classification of the language elements in use; and though its tabular form may imply that we are dealing with something static, fixed, we are obviously very well aware that this is not so.

Thus we conclude with our original thought: meeting all the child's language needs means taking into account all of the child. He comes to school already richly experienced in the power of language: from his earliest years he has known the magic of a sound to indicate his wants--and get them seen to; he has learned the tones that mean approval or impatience or a hundred other human emotions, for that is what he lives by; he has chanted the shapes of taunts and insults, by himself or with his friends, to rout the enemy; he has in some deep region perceived the puzzles and terrors of his existence and sometimes brought them up into the light in a word picture, his dragons and monsters and mice; his endless questions about his surroundings have set him on the road to discovery. In language he is getting to know himself and his world, defining himself, creating out of himself patterns of sound that confirm his existence to himself and to others. This inquiry has tried to indicate where his needs and competencies fit into an overall view, because it is on these that we have to build. And in considering how to help him to comprehensiveness, we have touched on precision too, for the surest foundation of language work is the child's struggling to articulate just what he inherently needs to come to terms with. Precision begins in relevance. And then the development of precision as a constant in language use, the ensuring that relevance doesn't peter out in sterile repetition, is attained by continual follow-through into areas related as we have seen them in the table, pressing the language activities wider and deeper, extending the territory to be explored.

A UNIT ON NEIGHBORHOODS

GRADE TWO

by Christine San Jose

This set of lessons was designed for a second grade at Heman Street. I hadn't worked with this particular class before, but had sufficient experience with other primary grades in the school to be fairly sure that I would face the following apparent problems in the children's approach to learning: (1) little interest in acquiring information for its own sake; (2) little propensity to the curiosity that prompts interest in acquiring specific information; (3) no ready joy in the pursuit of ideas, even those clothed as materially as possible; (4) no ready joy in sustained attention to one theme; (5) little interest in playing with imaginative ideas either, for example, story telling.

That's the negative aspect. Two unmissable positive aspects qualify the view. The first is the children's affectionate acceptance of any teacher who even halfway treats them like human beings and understands their willingness to cooperate. The second, obviously closely related, is the children's lack of self-assertion of themselves as individuals within the school. They just don't take up much space; they keep themselves narrowly circumscribed and avoid unnecessary displacement of the atmosphere, both physically and mentally. This makes for a tranquil classroom, but that's not why I call it positive. On the contrary: for tranquility in the classroom is too often a euphemism for lethargy. Its positiveness lies in its indication that emphasis should be placed on *apparent* in consideration of "apparent problems." Are these children really uninterested, incurious, unimaginative? I'm not saying here, "They'd be interested enough if we'd only pay some attention to what *they're* interested in." That message I presume we all have by now. And I'm not saying simply that they don't regard school as the place to concern themselves with their real interests, though that looms large in the problem. I'm saying that their lack of self-assertion in school may well indicate a lack of self-concept therein, so that the children-as-learners effectively do not have any strong interests, other than day-to-day survival within the system. Children of this kind are often described as apathetic, but perhaps acquiescent gives a truer picture. They have erased whatever interests they may have before they got to school, probably with the first realization on waking that this was a school-day; and now they offer us a smudged but comparatively blank slate on which to inscribe what we will.

With other classes I had done some work aiming for recognition of sensations and to a certain extent of emotions, finding language to

discuss them. Usually I start with the fun of exploring one's own sensations there and then within what the classroom has to offer. We observe, try to define, refine. The basic objective is to encourage the children's self-awareness in what they themselves are experiencing. The language they use then celebrates the experience and reinforces the self-awareness. On this basis of shared, but fundamentally personal, awareness we can build comparisons, or branch out into more imaginative experiences. Obviously this is so true of what one is trying to do in any kind of education that it virtually goes without saying. What I am drawing attention to here is, first, what seems to me a good place to begin, and spend plenty of time at, with these children; and second, that in these circumstances the interrelation of language as a tool of thought, personal and shared, with the children's self-awareness, self-concept, and self-confidence should never be lost sight of.

Parenthetically I might add that so far I have found very limited use for audiovisual aids. Some music, because sometimes it helps get the children moving (I think kinaesthetic and spatial work should come in early and prominently) -- and because it's a delight. But the crux of this approach to teaching, surely, of getting from the sensations and feelings of humanity to thought, ideas, abstractions, is the generation of mental excitement within the individual with his own resources.

An amiable third grade had extended these initial exercises to the creation of a market in Italy, with some rudimentary role-playing and songs and artwork. For second grade I had bigger ambitions: developing a concept. The teacher had given carte blanche, but to fit in with traditional second grade fare I opted for Neighborhoods. In our few lessons together the children might just as well be themselves and make up their own neighborhoods, anything they liked, and make models of them in Art; especially as the school is blessed with an extraordinarily talented and enthusiastic art teacher, who has intuitively been putting into practice in art for years much of what language should be doing for children. Ideally, of course, that is what all art and music teachers are doing.

First the children had an art lesson in which they drew pictures of a room in their own house. The art teacher had them think about the physical features of the room, themselves in it, its relation to the rest of the house, the view from the window. A very noticeable characteristic of these drawings was their individuality. Usually an attractive idea spreads across an art room like crown fire. One lucky youngster hits on pretty curtains around a big window, and by seemingly instantaneous combustion half the drawings in the room have pretty curtains around big windows. But this time the artists were obviously working from pictures in their own minds, no one else's, and with painstaking attention to true detail.

The next approach to the concept -- the individual within the neighborhood -- was to have been in the music lesson. The young music teacher, eager to try out new ideas, liked the plan to do this through a study of the orchestra. Each instrument can make music by itself in its own character. Or it can join with other instruments, either in its own family or outside. Families of instruments can play together, or can join in the whole orchestra, the unique voices in polyphony. Harmony, counterpoint,

discord, rhythms -- how can anyone study neighborhoods without studying the orchestra? And choirs. And the beauty of it is that the children can get through to the concepts by themselves with the minimum of direction. They can hear for themselves, and can themselves make different sounds and rhythms and combinations. We thought to have at least two, more probably three, lessons along these lines. But the lot of the special teacher is especially frustrating. It's bad enough that just when you're up and flying high with one class there's another one waiting at the door, and always early, it seems, if you want the extra time with their predecessors -- or late, if you wanted to get going on something special with them. To top that, you see each class just once a week, so if for any reason that lesson doesn't come off, you've lost them for the time being. We had one bad week after another in music during the neighborhood lessons. The music teacher was absent, or there was a song to be learned for Halloween or Thanksgiving or Christmas, or there were too many absences in the class, or a film for all the school, or a holiday. But one fine day we *shall* study the neighborhoods in the orchestra. Anyway, this first lesson, had we had it, would have indicated the general direction of the unit (towards the full orchestra), then concentrated on the individual instruments, their distinguishing particularities. The children would also have listened to their own voices speaking and singing, discerning distinguishing features.

The next lesson I had with the children in their own classroom started off with a sense exploration. Close your eyes and open your ears and just what exactly do you hear? I was so attuned to our railroad town neighborhood that I heard all sorts of shuntings in the distance. Surprisingly, the children heard nothing of them. But then they'd all heard the heating machine in the room puffing and blowing away; which I hadn't. Or didn't think I had . . . Talking around that one led us into all sorts of interesting ramifications, such as sounds near and far, tricks your mind plays on your senses. They're a small class (only twenty-two) and seated in a square, which makes possible a fair amount of all-class give and take. Then we tried "Close your eyes and imagine you're down by the tracks". Then somebody had us try what we heard in the backyard; somebody took us on to trying the backyard at night. Then somebody (it could have been me, but I hope not) had us try what we heard on the moon. Then what did we see on the moon, smell, feel on our skin, and gradually we'd filled out a sense image of being there. When we did the same with other places pretty soon monsters began creeping in, until they threatened to take over the show.

Then we thought about which of these places it would be fun to live in, and why. Round about here we began seeing these different places as different neighborhoods, and we linked this with what they'd read so far about neighborhoods in their social studies test. This had them in the position of experts; they'd done the reading, and were telling me. They also had to tell me something of their own neighborhood, and how they fitted in. Then it seemed like a good idea to make up our own neighborhoods, and eventually make models of them. So we decided who wanted to work on what sort of neighborhood and formed four discussion groups accordingly. Four cheerful little girls and a stolid boy wanted to talk about what goes on in "Our Own Neighborhood". Four bijou little girls and a quiet boy wanted to talk about a "Perfect Neighborhood". The boys who had been most relevant and articulate in the preceding discussion wanted to talk about a

"Moon Neighborhood"; and the boys with the earmarks of potential runaways (if I'm any judge of little boys) were already capping each other's horrors in accounts of a "Monster Neighborhood".

By this time we had had three quarters of an hour or more together, but fortunately the children were still enthusiastic and the teacher was apparently in no hurry to return, so we had over fifteen minutes for discussion in groups. This was not, as may be imagined, high-level exchange; but the groups were lively, orderly and kept more or less to the point. Shortly before our time was up, "Our Own Neighborhood" decided they had come to the end of useful talk and asked (entirely their own idea) for paper to draw what they'd been talking about. "Perfect Neighborhood" soon followed suit. "Moon" and "Monsters" were still going strong when the teacher returned and desks were restored to rightful positions.

Our next meeting was in the art room. The art teacher gave them the materials to make little houses, one each, which next week they could put together in the neighborhoods. The children were working at the four art-room tables in their neighborhood groups, but there was no discussion going on. Such talk as there was consisted of "Who's got the purple paint/ fat brush/stapler/etc.?" or "You're splashing/pushing/copying me","No I am not"; or, rarely, "Gee that's cool" (almost always referring to one's own work) or "Look at this I did", with little or no response, at least spoken response. I was disappointed, presuming that they were fed up with the neighborhood notion and had nothing more to say.

As I went and sat with them at the different tables, however, and saw them wrapped up in their houses, I realized I'd fallen prey to that particular crassness of the word-oriented. We're so conscious of the thought-language twining, and in addition so likely ourselves to choose language as a medium of expression where other people might choose something else, that we don't always leave others in the peace they prefer for getting on with what they're doing. I thought back to how well the children had known, in the previous lesson, when they had finished with talk and wanted to start drawing. And I wondered how I would have reacted had the art teacher suggested, "They might as well be doing some art work while they're just talking. . ." When word-oriented people play about with the idea of "How do I know what I want to say until I've said it?" they might remember that there are also "How do I know what I want to paint/dance/ sing/until I've painted/danced/sung it?" This consideration is obviously of prime importance if we wish to concern ourselves with building through the child's sensations and feelings to abstractions. If we wish to build on a really firm basis, there are more stages to be gone through than are presently taken into account. Otherwise, there is a very real danger of premature verbalism.

I know from experience that talk before an art lesson can induce considerable energy and direction during the art; and that in talk after an art lesson insights and personal convictions pop up at a greater rate than usual; but talk *during* an art lesson is chancy. Watching for what I hoped was the right moment, tentatively, not necessarily expecting a reply, I did manage a few exchanges. But I didn't spark any child-to-child conversation. And of the answers I was favored with, I suspect most of them were courtesy rejoinders. I've been back to the art room since.

It's a cheering place to be, anyway, with a great batting average of whole-hearted process and lively product. But I've never managed to extend verbal exchanges there very far. I work at whatever project the class is on, and as the children in the school get to know me I'm usually accepted as one of the group at the table and they open up; that is, they ask me for the purple paint and fat brush, or complain that I'm splashing or getting in the way, or, very rarely, direct my attention to some cool thing they've just done. (Even more rarely they say "Gee, that's cool" to something I've done. But that's usually out of kindness.) And when I'm busy working that's about as much talk as I can take. I'll believe the language experts that I'm using language to think out what I want to do. But are the children? Perhaps they're not. Perhaps that's why their work is so much fresher and livelier than mine?

After the art lesson with houses, a second (had we ever had the first!) music lesson would have come in very well. This one would have moved nearer the full orchestra or choir by looking at family groupings of instruments and voices. The children would experiment with combinations of the rhythm instruments, and would again consider their own voices as well, and we could have done a little preliminary choral speaking.

Next lesson: in the classroom. We did some warm-up exercises, getting more precise with the sense explorations than before, going a little faster. The reaction of these unimaginative children (as many of the teachers characterize them) was a little startling. My very first "Close your eyes: what do you hear" -- a straightforward factual listening exercise -- at once elicited "The wind in a forest!" "A truck crashing into a wall!" "--I meant, what can you really hear? Can you really hear the truck?" "Sure! I heard the glass smashing and somebody screamed and --". "And there was a dog barking!" from the back of the room. Fair enough. I was pretty bored with the space heater myself now I knew it wasn't rushing onwards to midwestern plains. So we played around with building up imaginative scenes, and then went to the next logical step, to what it felt like to be in those places, how we would react. Then we wondered how other people would react, interact.

I thought we might be ready to do some role-playing; but it wasn't successful. As I said at the beginning, these children don't take possession of space and move through it with confidence. Therefore, however well they may think themselves into someone else's shoes, and suggest how that person would move and what he would say, they are still a long way from acting out that person, feeling from the inside the moving and talking that they had suggested, building on it. Once children have had some experience with moving in this context one can make the switch from talking to moving, but these children had had none. Anyway that neighborhood morning we cut our losses and got back to talking about the different people.

Unfortunately the abortive acting-out had dampened the first fine careless rapture of characterization. So by the time we had come around to talking about character interactions in their chosen neighborhoods I was feeling uncomfortably like that alter ego of the strength-through-joy teacher; that is, the relentless social-director on the good ship Hope. Still, we had ascertained, for example, that there was trouble on the moon:

Raymond was an astronaut working hard there, building a house, planting a garden, trying to settle with his family, and the wandering moon creatures were taking things off his house and eating his vegetables. The monsters, we gathered, were all naughty and noisy with very unsettled work habits and tended to bump into each other when they went for a walk rather than exchange polite greetings. In the perfect neighborhood everyone was working together to build beautiful swimming pools and a playground and keeping it very clean and you hardly ever heard children crying because it was so pretty there and everybody was so nice to each other and there was music all day. I had a mental image of the broken pavements and shabby shopfronts of the main street down the road, the litter blown along by the draft from the cars and trucks cutting through the town. But no need to feel sorry for "Our Own Neighborhood". Apparently it's full of friends going back and forth and aunts and uncles swapping gossip and grandparents and the truck drivers are great and sometimes people quarrel and sometimes they fight and somebody's big sister isn't going to babysit any more for whoever because they don't always pay but there are two of the dads who go fishing together -- and so on and on. We did some role-playing conversations at the desks, but I'm not sure they were worth much.

In the next art lesson the children put the houses together on the neighborhoods, four very large pieces of thick cardboard. They all had paint and different materials to choose from, such as swatches of cloth, eggshells, sand in different sizes and colors, lollipop sticks, and plasticine. I gave them plenty of time to glue their own houses on, and landscape around them; then as the activity became communal within the neighborhood I essayed a little conversation. At "Our Own Neighborhood" table the talk quickly became general. Opinions were exchanged on both playing and fighting. Gardens were discussed, what you could plant, what was best. There was consideration of fathers going out of the neighborhood to work during the daytime and other people from outside coming in to work, such as gas men and TV repairmen and the guys that chop down trees. They weren't aiming for realistic representation, but one verisimilitude was striking: the houses were neat and bright set on diverse, devotedly tended plots, and the neighborhood facilities were nil. I tried to get them talking about this, but they just weren't interested.

"Perfect Neighborhood" was the place to go for this, I thought. But no. All those fine words beforehand about building together, and then when it came to it, there they were: private swimming pools, play equipment in your own backyard. The thickest, lushest swatches of green had been chopped and patched to fit from edge to edge of each property line -- around the swimming pools, naturally. (I didn't have the stomach to ask which was lawn and which was patio and poolside carpeting.) "My house is very nice, don't you think?" This was the little potential tantrum-thrower. "My family's all inside. They're very happy there, it's such a nice house. And all the other houses here -- very nice." "People are very happy in their cars," someone else remarked. "Look we made lovely wide roads." "I thought there was going to be a park for the whole neighborhood where the people would meet together and the swimming pool --" (me). "We don't need one. We've all got swimming pools." "What if you didn't have enough money to build one each --?" "We have. We've all got one." And they firmly directed attention to the various joys of their

individual properties.

Moon neighborhood did not enjoy this unanimity, however. Apparently they were agreed on the general ground covering: crunchy. But there was Raymond putting up a fence, while the irresponsible moon creatures were sticking wild things on their houses, chutes and slides for getting in and out through the roof. "When they walk they walk in the air. They're like feathers up there." "A moon creature lives here but he's out. He shot out the roof. He's out looking for food. He eats dirt." "This moonman's house is off on a star by itself. Look he's a wizard, he's making a garden" (dabbing the paint flowers on). "They have fights for Christmas up there," one of the smallest and quietest told me with great confidence. "They throw rocks." Then he added rather apologetically, "They *do* have rocks up there. I saw on TV." I'd thought it was only old fogies like teachers who had difficulty squaring their lunar landscapes with the now proven realities, but it would seem they're having trouble even as young as second grade.

As for the Monsters, they were delighted with their homeground. Great stripes of paint swirled over the neighborhood from edge to edge. "They don't grow things, they *paint* them." "They go to work. They go to school . . . They're big monsters and little monsters. But they're all fathers." "They're all fathers." "They're nice monsters." "Sometimes they fight, but not bad. They stab each other but they don't die. When they want to stab hard, they go out and stab other people in other places." "They make Christmas trees, they *paint* them." "They smash houses, their own houses, and build them over." "They eat paint. They eat anything they can find." Boy with fat paintbrush putting dabs of paint all over neighborhood, "Those are the feet all over, the monsters' feet and ours. The monster climbed all over this house (plonk plonk with the paintbrush on the roof) and this house." No one protested the dabs of paint on his roof. They all loved each other's swathes of paint. The remarks had come out on the heels of each other, sparked by the neighborhood enthusiasm. I don't think the monsters were producing art and I'm not sure how improving the oral communication was, but there was surely a whole lot of therapy going on if only I'd known what!

We had a little time to look at each other's neighborhoods at the end, but by now we were all too wrapped up in our own and too tired to drum up much conversation about the similarities and dissimilarities. Anyway, these were visually obvious.

This, I'm afraid, is where the lessons ended. Not a satisfactory conclusion. A full-orchestra music lesson -- different kinds of orchestras, bands, combos -- would have been fine to inject just a little new material to carry us through to a more construction wind-up. I'd have liked a final session with general discussion about the different models. It would have been nice to have some fifth graders transcribe what was said and make up books. But as it was I felt we'd ridden this particular wave as far as we could. There's still a lot of the year left. With any luck we might do the music lessons and choral speaking and role playing later, even refer back to our neighborhoods, even get fifth grade in to help.

So to what extent did this series of lessons build through the children's own sensations and feelings to thought? It seems ludicrous to evaluate a modest, ordinary enough little project in such ambitious terms; but after all an education is made up of years made up of weeks made up of days made up lesson by lesson, so perhaps it's requisite. Seen in this light the flaw is huge, glaring, basic: we never really got away from the concrete. It's expecting too much that second graders should tussle with the issues of city planning, but more skillful preparation and guidance of discussion might well have elicited more concern with general elements determining the character of a neighborhood. There should have been more categorization, more chance for the children to see clearly how we could group together the various things they said and so compare these elements in the different circumstances. Insofar as I guided the discussions it was along these lines, as that is the way education has taught me to think; but I didn't spell out to the children that this was being done. We should have tried at some stage as we went along to make notes, the children being guided to find some organization. It might have been a fiasco: but we should have tried. I know that what I am saying here means aiming to teach not just a concept but the concept of a concept. Put this formally it looks like a formidable task for primary grades. But translated into basics as I have indicated above -- grouping, comparing, *knowing that these things are being done, seeing how they are done* -- I think it's essential.

As for teaching the concept itself, giving some idea what 'neighborhood' means, the score is rather higher. I wanted the children to recognize themselves as essentially individuals interacting within a community of other individuals. I think the detailed account here given indicates that they did in fact do so. The ultimate fate of the artifact neighborhoods was their being cut up into separate plots that could be taken home. This was done by the children with attention not only to their own plot but also to sensible and equitable subdivision. (I hope that means something!) But those private swimming pools still bother me. We should have considered individual responsibility more. I thought we had, in our talks, but there wasn't much indication that it went home.

The score isn't too bad either on personal involvement, or on defining an area of interest and pursuing that interest, seeing it from different aspects, developing it. On the more superficial level of "improving oral communication", we certainly managed a fair amount of personally felt, relevant, articulate talk, and there was undoubtedly more conviction, more constructive exchange, as we went along; but, of course, a great deal of this apparent improvement was merely a result of our getting to know each other better.

Perhaps the kindest overall verdict would be: it wasn't too bad a *beginning* for a study of Neighborhood. It didn't go far, but as far as it went it wasn't unsound.

LANGUAGE FACE TO FACE

by Christine San Jose

The EPDA project members knew what language problems to expect at Hemam Street before they started work in the school. They had read and discussed current research on "language deprivation"; they realized how important it was for the children to express in their own words the concepts being taught; they were committed to involvement of the children's own feelings and thoughts in their learning. They knew that to accomplish many of their aims they would work through the personal demands and immediacy of oral language. I for one was eager to put into practice my ideas for bridging the gap between "restricted code" and "elaborated code" (to use Basil Bernstein's terminology). I would help the children expand their socio-centric speech (speech of narrow range relying heavily on intonation, pitch, gesture and other nonverbal indications, useful mainly for shared, common, concrete referents) to include the verbal precision necessary for reference to differentiated individual experience, for discussion of more abstract matters, and for subtler organization.

When we started work in the school we talked a lot to the teachers about these findings and goals, and were quite often listened to. They had listed many of their problems for us, hoping for our help. Writing problems, for example, included: "How can we create the interest and enthusiasm necessary for good creative writing?" "How can we get children to really express their thoughts and write them as if they were speaking?" Reading problems included: "Many children can read, but don't. In testing situations, they show up as retarded readers. This appears to be a problem of attitudes. What steps need to be taken?" "Many children can read words but often cannot understand all they have read. How can we be sure that a child is understanding what he reads?" Listening problems included: "How can I make every discussion lesson have enough give-and-take so that everyone is listening?" What we were saying to the teachers seemed very relevant to these concerns. "Involvement of thoughts and feelings . . ." "Express in own words . . ." "Meet each child where he is . . .". It might be mentioned here that, as a matter of fact, the teachers had made for us no list of problems concerning speech. In retrospect, I just can't imagine why we didn't explore this omission at the time.

I was working mainly on the first stages of creative dramatics, such as encouraging the children to experience different

kinds of movement, different uses of space; expanding sensory awareness through simple observation and imagination, and building the concomitant vocabulary. It wasn't going too badly. One class put on a show for a parents meeting with a mimed scene largely of their own devising, rising out of their work in social studies. At Christmas every child from kindergarten through grade 5 was involved in an all-school program, with something to show or a line to speak, as well as singing. What we were feeling our way towards, by this time, was visible expression of the children's existence as people. It was basically important that they sense themselves and each other, not in the passive role of pupil to be taught, graded, and passed on to the next stage, but rather as individual reactors and producers.

When we had thought we knew the problems we would be facing as we discussed them in the terms of the opening paragraph, we had been ignorant of the classroom actuality. "Meet the child where he is." It had been my favorite phrase, reinforced by a vivid mental image of walking with a group of children, perhaps through a wood or along a beach or over tufted slopes, pointing out to each other as we went the curious or beautiful or amusing things around us, sidepaths that the quicker, stronger ones could explore without getting lost and left behind. Enough real walks with real children had sharpened the image with a slight sense of anxiety. You had to take headcounts fairly often, and keep an eye open for lurking stings and potholes, and infinitely encourage the weary and tack back and forth to maintain individual contact, but on balance it was good being with them. Now I found that the image didn't bear up. Many times in the classroom I *couldn't* meet the child where he was. It wasn't just a matter of keeping an eye on front runners and stragglers and off-the-track explorers. There were those who for all the really personal contact one could make with them might as well be walking on the moon. The classroom to them was not the place to be their real, rounded selves. Some of them had troubles at home that made them this way; but the majority of them were merely reacting to their perception of school.

Helping one of these children, then, to expand his restricted code to include elaborated was hardly a possibility since he wasn't about to offer much of anything at all. Restricted code of its very nature demands a situation of mutual personal awareness, of common reference, if it is to be effective at all. Elaborated code does not. It is, as we noted, the language of differentiation, capable of impersonality. It is therefore possible to make intellectual contact in elaborated code, even though there may be mutual alienation between the speakers. Thus a child who is capable of elaborated code, as most middle class children are, can still make intellectual contact with his teachers, can still learn something, however great a personal distance he may maintain from school. But the child who is limited to restricted code cannot. He must speak in the language of common personal referents or not at all. I think most of us came up against this problem at one time or another.

Dr. Kidson, for example, took it on in one of its extreme forms -- some eight or so kindergartners who were virtual nontalkers in class. She finally had them responding with great enthusiasm; and close attention to the recordings she made indicates that this she accomplished not just by her very careful, experienced language work, but also -- perhaps even mainly -- by the interest she engendered with the little props she would make for the children to fit each story. "What's your favorite color?" she had gently repeated in one of the earlier sessions -- with no reply. But by the time they came to *Caps for Sale*, and she was taking orders for the individual hats she would make for them, they were voicing their preferences very clearly! I also found nonverbal work a useful invitation to nonparticipants, up to and including fifth graders. Movement, use of space, mime -- these a virtual nontalker would often enjoy; and once we had him with us he was much more likely to join in verbally also.

The reluctant talker, then, was a fairly common, and obviously basic, difficulty, for which we weren't prepared beforehand. Its solution called for specific strategies. We had spent many hours discussing philosophy, but faced with classroom actuality we needed a lot more than that.

In this light, let us look again at the examples in the second paragraph of the problems the teachers had listed. Let us look at them as if we were actually facing them in the classroom. It becomes very obvious that philosophical generalities are not much help. "How to create the interest and enthusiasm necessary for good creative writing?" This obviously calls for talk in class involving the child's own thoughts and feelings. But how to set about it? How to meet the children where they are and set them on some sort of path so that they can develop their writing in self-renewing interest and enthusiasm? And basal readers -- how can we get the children to relate to them through talk? By the time we arrived at the oral language workshop for the teachers, in the spring semester, we knew that activities had to be very specific. Further, there was obviously no point in attempting a crash course on speaking and drama. Merely giving the recipes for activities that we had ourselves found successful wasn't much use either; if what the teachers had seen us doing hadn't caught on already, there wasn't much point in rehashing it.

So in organizing the workshop we circulated a long list of suggestions for speech and drama activities a week or so before the meeting, asked those who planned to attend to try some of them out beforehand so that we could discuss any difficulties that might arise, and then after the workshop participating teachers would develop an activity over several lessons. Teachers would write full, candid reports on these activities, which we would then distribute. The remainder of this chapter is given over to extracts from some of these reports.

Language Games and Miming in First Grade

Winona Spahr

I began by setting aside five to fifteen minutes a day for simple oral language activities. I found that the class enjoyed a game which I call "I Wish I Were." One child described something and the others must guess what he is describing. At the beginning the children were very limited in their description and also in what they described. For example, "I wish I were something that flies" was a favorite and many children would use it. After a while some of the more verbal children became more original and descriptive. However, it was necessary to give them examples and ideas at first.

I then wanted to expand to some simple role playing. We began to play "Let's Pretend," a game in which one child would pretend he was doing something and the others must guess what it was. The children love this game but it has followed the same pattern as "I Wish I Were." The children found it difficult to think of new ideas and so they would do the same thing as the child before. One day the whole game consisted of children walking along and tripping. The first boy to go up did this -- the class thought it was very funny -- and all others did the same thing.

To plant some fresh ideas, I usually begin the game and the child who guesses what I am goes first. They are beginning to do some original things and are also becoming more expressive but it's a slow process. And there are still some children who don't want to get up before the group, but the number is getting smaller.

I would now like to have two children work out something. I will start by giving them the situation until they are able to make up their own.

Please note Miss Spahr's persistence. She is undeterred by initial shyness, limitations and occasional silliness. Also note:

-- the regularity of the activity, setting up expectations and patterns, making for steady development.

-- the putting in of new ideas when necessary, but always leaving room for the children to contribute all they can. When the children are really out of ideas, I have often found it advisable to draw up a lot, possibly in a class brainstorming. Using too few doesn't usually spark them off, results rather in slavish imitation. Using a lot entails at least choosing, and encourages original combinations.

-- the pacing. Miss Spahr allows plenty of time for each stage of development. Allowing for the growth of originality and expressiveness is, as she so rightly says, a slow process.

Characterization in Role Playing in Third Grade

Susan Fox

I began with the idea of building up characters through questioning. Children were all for role playing but were stumped about how to develop their character.

In the beginning sessions, we attempted to have one child up at a time, pretending to be someone else. This person would answer any and all questions thrown out to him from the class. From the questions asked, the child was able to create a character.

From one character playing, we went to two characters. The same questioning technique was used. The types of questions the children asked were: who are you? what do you do? where do you live? do you like your job? how much do you make? are you married? have a family? are you happy?

The class, under my direction, discussed the types of questions that were asked. We talked about how these questions helped build up a character. The children were able to recognize what questions were more pertinent than others, and branched out from questions about fact to questions about feelings, attitudes, opinions.

After an unsuccessful try at writing a paragraph about one character based on questioning technique, I reverted to oral routines which proved more valuable.

When I felt the children were tiring of one or two character playing with questioning, I then proceeded with two character playing involving a conflict. A third party came in to try to settle the conflict. This is the point I'm up to now. I find this particular role playing idea working well. The children have developed some marvelous ideas portraying conflict between two people, and are remarkably articulate.

My next step will be, I think, to further this role playing idea to more than two or three characters, possibly a group of children portraying a group of characters involved in a similar situation.

Please note: Characterization work is especially useful for learning to question as it genuinely reverses the usual classroom roles. This time it is the child knowing what character he is portraying who has the information. He experiences directly what sort of questions are bringing out that characterization

and which are not. Mrs. Fox used a tape recorder, so that the flow of questions was not interrupted the first time through. This way the characterization work could continue on its own right, without being turned into an exercise.

Role Playing in Fourth Grade

Maureen McManus

My class had been involved in language activities related to role playing before the workshop. Therefore, it seemed only natural at the time, to attempt some role playing as a follow-up project.

The class' reaction was enthusiastic and "pretending" soon became an anticipated part of the school day. The first few episodes (an airline hijacking and a trial for Robin Hood) were a pleasant surprise. Even the usually reserved children took a more active part than I had expected. Some episodes were not as successful as others but in general things went well for the first several days. (The children's explanations, for the success of certain episodes, was that they paralleled things they played after school. Obviously I had no wish merely to repeat in the classroom what they were doing outside school anyway; but it seemed like a sound base on which to build.)

Spurred on by these minor "triumphs," I encouraged more movement. I had hoped this would create a more natural atmosphere which would increase the verbal expression. This was a mistake. On paper it sounded reasonable. In the classroom, it was devastating. The first of these episodes involved an "Old People's Home." We had practiced appropriate movements while walking to our special classes (the only available time). All went well for the first few minutes. Little old ladies were engaged in conversation about grandchildren as they "rocked on the sunporch" and little old men reminisced about "the good old days." Another triumph I thought; until conversation gave way to a preoccupation with the movements. The result was a spirited wheelchair race. Undaunted we kept trying the next few days, but with the same result: lots of action, little talk.

We have not given up role playing but we have made a temporary strategic withdrawal from large-scale efforts. Now we are working on such activities as interviewing, describing, discussion of characters and radio plays. We are also doing miming and playing charades. This way we are working on verbal and non-verbal expression independently and gradually integrating them; all with the hope of working our way up to successful role playing on a larger, more comprehensive scale.

Please note Miss McManus's comment on "play" in the classroom, with which I entirely agree. Another way of dealing with the problem might have been for the class to devise a situation in which action played a more valid part, and then to work at the action with precision in order to convey character or historical period or appropriate stylization. Playing "statues" with characterized actions, or mirror action in pairs, are two other ways of tapping natural energies without letting loose chaos.

Note, too, the cropping up towards the end of a not uncommon problem. I think Miss McManus copes with it very constructively. Role playing should never be allowed to degenerate into fooling around. It's not a bad idea to have a bell or other noisemaker on hand to signal instant freeze. Freezing is a frequently revealing device in role playing as well as an emergency measure when the art begins to lose hold on its own discipline.

Language Centeredness in Fourth Grade

Diane Seidenstein

In an effort to expand the language base of the children in my room, I have set up a role playing situation. We have worked in two different ways, in small groups (two or three interacting) and as a total class. An activity that provided for a little different kind of language pattern, but still in an area of familiarity, was selecting a sports activity to pantomime. After miming a selected sport (basketball, boxing, baseball, etc.) I would put each student into a specific role, such as manager, loser, winner. This served to limit and specify language and gave children, especially in the loser role, opportunities to vent aggression.

The second situation we tried was a group of three students, trying to persuade the third to smoke. The third activity, using an entire class interacting with one another, is still in process. The children suggested ideas and finally decided on an investigation of users of marijuana. They decided who the characters would be, and each child assumed the role of hippie, parent, cop, or pusher. Since I found that the group really didn't understand the difference between marijuana and hard-core drugs, we had a discussion about that. Then, as a start, I acted as interviewer and posed questions to each child so that he would know his new person. We have finished the interviews now and are about to discuss the kinds of language used by each group.

On one occasion they wrote about the characters they were. One child did his in the form of a questionnaire. (Testing and [illegible] are affecting us!)

Please note: Mrs. Seidenstein's first activity is a good example of feeling through movement leading into verbal expression.

The third type of activity she mentions has potential both as a useful model for language study and as an adjunct to social studies.

Mrs. Seidenstein also did a lot of work with puppets, which sometimes provide a mask for feelings and opinions that children don't want to admit as their own. A soft-spoken young lady, Mrs. Seidenstein developed in her work on characterization one of the most relentless "why's" in the profession.

Oral Language Activities in First Grade

Arlene Aspell

Be alert to various articles children bring to school and to their conversation with other children and with you. One day a boy brought in a model of a Pan Am jet. This led to discussion of types of planes (especially jet vs. propeller), listing of different commercial airlines, stories of individual visits to an airport, explaining why airplanes fly, describing characteristics which make some paper airplanes fly better than others.

Another boy became fascinated with a reptile book from the library. Soon everyone in the class had to see it, so we all talked about it, and I began to supply the room with similar books. First we talk as a class about these books and later the children pick them up on their own and much discussion ensues in small groups.

Use an opaque projector to display pages from a "Peanuts" coloring book. Cover the captions and have children tell what they think the situation is and what the characters are saying. They have to think whether they look happy, sad, lonesome, angry, greedy, annoyed, contented, etc. and then imagine why. Some children put themselves into the characters' positions and create a conversation.

Use interesting pictures to stimulate children's imaginations and develop their ability to do more than just tell what is happening. (The last page of *Life* magazine often provides fun pictures.) One picture showed a boy trying to stuff a very big frog into a very little pocket. We explored all possible reasons for the boy's action and went on to discuss how the frog might feel. Then some of the children told how they had caught frogs and what they did with them.

Use songs as a focus for conversation. I used "The Marvelous Toy" from the album *Peter, Paul and Mommy*. The toy does all kinds of things and makes several sounds, but nobody knows what it is; the children guessed what it might be and told why.

Please note: Miss Aspell here gives just a few examples of constructive encouragement of the children's own thoughts and feelings. This was Miss Aspell's first year of teaching, and she thought she was hopeless. The children, however, apparently disagreed, often staying in her room after school until she had to shoo them home.

Other Examples of Language Teaching

There were also interesting reports of oral language used to bring specific subject matter home to the children. The music teacher, Mrs. Allen, stressed discussion of the lyrics, especially some of the appropriate rock hits. Then the children can set a favorite poem of their own to music; or write lyrics to a favorite tune. Listening to orchestral music is a fine starting point for discussion or story telling. Mrs. Allen has also played musical question-and-answer games based on spoken intonation and rhythm patterns.

Mrs. Teitelbaum, the art teacher, described playing music and discussing it prior to painting and drawing. She had also had the children acting out emotions at the beginning of lessons, and another time discussing different kinds of lines, how they can move, where they can move, in what manner. Mrs. Teitelbaum always made considerable use of oral exchange in her classes; and the art she stimulated was invitingly fresh and individual.

The report of one of the master's candidates, April Rowland, working with Mrs. Boylan in second grade, describes how they tried to incorporate oral language into regular activities, thus making time in the busy school day for experiences they knew children needed. They described a social studies and science unit dealing with the wind and its effects on man and nature. Ideas were listed on the board, and they had the children divide into small groups to make up skits about these effects.

> "The only stipulations placed on the children were that they must use oral language and each person in the group must have a definite role. The results:
>
> (1) One group acted out a story about a mother who hangs out her clothes to dry, but they keep getting dirty. She blames her children, but finally discovers that the wind is blowing the dirt.
>
> (2) A second group showed a father and his children buying a kite and trying to put it together. Everything went wrong, until finally the baby of the family showed them how to do it. This group had a hard time thinking of something to act out, but once they hit on this idea, their role playing was good.

(3) In art work in the classroom, the children had made little windmills, so this third group did a skit about windmills. They were all looking at a windmill and talking about it, but they soon ran out of conversation because they know very little about windmills.

(4) The fourth group all pretended to be the wind in a storm, but they too soon ran out of things to say. In all cases, more oral language came when the children dealt with concrete experiences rather than with more abstract ones such as this."

(With second graders this loose structure is probably as effective as any, but with third graders and above I would have the children do their subject-related research in groups and then present their illustrative skits to their classmates, prepared to answer any questions. In a history unit, for example, each child can draw from a hat the name of an historical personage. It then becomes his responsibility to find out all he can about that person and get together with the people [represented on other slips of paper in the hat] whom his historical character knew. Depending on the historical periods the children have been studying, this idea can be elaborated or simplified. For example, Ben Franklin's life might be divided into stages with groups of children prepared to dramatize incidents from each one.)

The last example from this second grade unit on the wind is an imaginative way of bringing home to children a human experience with which they are not personally familiar, a vicarious extension of their personal experience.

"To continue the study of wind, the class talked about kinds of storms in which wind played a bad role. We discussed storms they had experienced and how they felt about storms. They chose a hurricane as the kind of storm they would be most afraid of. We divided into four groups and gave enough time for each group to plan a skit about the reactions of a family when a hurricane is about to strike. Some families showed panic, while others remained calm. Later, we discussed the words and actions that had told how each felt. All groups did well on this, probably because the roles they played were familiar even if the situation was not."

Note in the following section how the further try at more abstract imaginative work has this time been led up to by a closely related foray into the concrete. One infers rather more success this time, though again it isn't easy.

"In art class the children made paper kites. Not only did this fit in nicely with the science, but oral language was easily brought into the picture.

Individually or in pairs, the children acted out flying a kite. We got lots of oral language, all the way from descriptions of the beauty of the sky and clouds as the child looked up at his kite, to explosive epithets as the child's kite got caught in a tree.

"After this fairly concrete activity, we tried a more abstract one. The children pretended to be kites themselves, and were supposed to talk about how they felt as they were flown. One kite expressed his happiness as his owner let go of the string and he was free at last. Another kite expressed his irritation because his owner was a poor kite flyer. Another kite got so tired, he was happy when he got caught in a tree. Other children couldn't think of a word to say though."

The following is included as an interesting example of children in their imaginative work hitting on an archetypal fantasy! I hope someone reads them *Jack and the Beanstalk* soon after or Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach*!

"The class was studying flowers and hoped to plant flower seeds and watch them grow. We used this interest to stimulate creative expression. One activity we tried was having the children, in pairs, pretend to plant a seed and discuss its growth. We were surprised at the variety of ways the children handled this. One pair planted a seed and were quite astonished when a monster grew from the seed!

"Another activity was to have the children pretend to be a seed themselves. Many had difficulty thinking of anything to say except merely, 'I'm growing and growing.' So we put them into groups of four to talk to each other about their growth. Making conversation with someone else was easier than delivering a monologue."

The following extract, from this same report, is the last, but by no means the least. One could easily point out its many virtues and suggest further variations and development, but the reader will see these for himself. Although it is a familiar enough activity, recommended in every basal reader manual, it is obvious that these teachers felt a sense of discovery when they began to see it from a new perspective.

"The largest reading group had read the story, 'Jack Rabbit and the Hiccups,' in their basal reader. It is the story of Jack Rabbit, who can't get rid of the hiccups and tries to find someone to cure them. He talks with many animals as he tries to solve his problem. One child from that reading group briefly told the story to the rest of the class. Then we split into three groups to work out skits based on the story. All three

groups came up with interesting and amusing skits, with a lot of improvising. From this experience, we think children enjoy role playing based on stories from their basal reader. Surely this can be justified during reading time for, in addition to developing oral language, it develops comprehension skills and other reading skills. It also certainly catches the children's enthusiasm."

The reader will notice that all these modest suggestions seem a far cry indeed from the ambitions mentioned in the opening paragraph. And yet I think the results of this workshop please me more than anything else I had a hand in last year. Several of these activities have found a place in the teachers' regular repertoires; and non-earthshaking as they may be, they're a step in the right direction. Besides, any teacher knows how warming it is when the people one has perhaps helped a little end up doing much better than one could have done oneself.

INTRODUCING INDIVIDUALIZED READING IN FIRST GRADE

by Theodore A. Mork

Mrs. Sheila Reback, one of the first grade teachers at Heman Street School, had read and heard about individualized reading programs. She was dissatisfied with her present reading program and thought she would like to change some of her teaching procedures.

Most of her children seemed to be learning how to read, but they were not becoming eager readers. They had been finishing pre-primers and primers as directed, but they did not seem to be interested in reading library books. Few of the children had experienced the satisfaction of having read a whole book from cover to cover. Particularly the better readers, it seemed to the teacher, were being "held back" in order to keep basal reading groups intact.

In September, Mrs. Reback had begun to establish in her classroom an atmosphere in which children could work cooperatively at solving problems. They were encouraged to help one another in their reading and writing, and to seek help from their peers when they needed it. When a child came across a word he could not figure out, he was encouraged to ask his neighbor. The same applied when the children were working on practice worksheets.

Obviously, allowing this interchange had required some changes in the teacher's attitudes toward silence in the classroom. Much attention was devoted to helping children *learn how to* talk with one another without disturbing everyone around them.

By December, with her basal reading program continuing, the children's independence seemed to be increasing. But Mrs. Reback was not satisfied. She felt that the children were too "locked into" the basal readers and that reading was not an enjoyable activity.

It was at this point that Mrs. Reback came to me for help. She wanted to know more about individualized reading. I had taught individualized reading but not in first grade. Mrs. Reback had taught first grade, but not individualized reading. We decided that together we should be able to devise a satisfactory program.

Mrs. Reback began by reading several books and articles on individualized reading. We had several discussions of the important

factors involved. How would we go about changing from a basal reading program to individualized reading? Should we start with one group, or with the whole class? How would we get children started in books? How would we teach children to make appropriate decisions about books to read and about activities related to books? How are conferences conducted? What kinds of questions should be asked? How would we decide who should have a conference? How often? What records should be kept? How? How are specific reading skills taught?

Obviously, these questions required some careful thought, and so did many others, as we were to find later. The most basic questions were studied and discussed first. Mrs. Reback was not convinced that the basal reading program should be abandoned completely. It was therefore decided to continue the regular basal program with all but the top reading group. The individualizing would be increased gradually for the children in the top group, then for a second group, and later for the class as a whole. This plan worked well. Mrs. Reback was able to retain the security provided by the basal series and at the same time begin emphasizing individualized reading with the children she felt were most ready for it.

In the beginning, half of two reading periods a week were devoted to individual conferences with children in the top reading group. It was obvious from the start that most of the children looked forward to these conferences. Because they seemed to enjoy the private conferences so much, it was not long before other children were asking for conferences. Of course, more children were included in the activity and more time was devoted to it.

As additional children wanted private conferences, it became more and more difficult for Mrs. Reback to conduct conferences and at the same time continue her basal program. One of the master's candidates in the EPDA program, Sandra Sutor, volunteered to help during these early stages. This achieved two purposes. It helped Mrs. Reback in getting started and it gave Mrs. Sutor a chance also to become more familiar with individualized reading in first grade.

Mrs. Sutor learned ways of conducting conferences and keeping records, and she provided various games and activities for the children to do during the work periods.

Having two teachers in the room during the reading period worked out very well. However, since one of our desires was to see whether this type of program could be handled by one teacher in a regular classroom, we tried to keep Mrs. Sutor's responsibilities at a minimum. As much as possible, Mrs. Reback carried the load of the full reading period. During the month of April Mrs. Sutor withdrew completely.

Several problems needed to be worked out as the program progressed. Mrs. Reback and I met at least once a week during February and March. The format developed naturally. Mrs. Reback came with

specific questions, and I came prepared to offer possible suggestions that she might adapt and try out. Following are some of the notes I made on problems discussed over the period of two months and some solutions that seemed to work well.

January 8

Meeting with Sheila Reback on individualized reading.

She had had five conferences this morning with children and was excited about them. She had determined areas of word attack skills for some of the children and had arrived at commitments from these children for their next activities. (e.g., "Read a particular book and draw four pictures to show what happened.")

Her concerns were about continuing the basal program for this top group and the comprehension skills she should be teaching.

We discussed the asking of questions that cause children to think through answers that they would not otherwise have. This part was particularly helpful to her.

We also discussed providing alternative activities for children and the use of questions like "Which of these do you want to work on?" rather than "Do you want to do this?" or "How about doing this?" This helps avoid the "no" answer.

We discussed Barbe's list as a possible list of skills to check children against, and also the basal reader manual.

January 12

Sheila is still having conferences on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She started with five children. After three days she is having some other children volunteering.

Her present concerns include proper selection of books by the children; how to get the children to take additional responsibility in selecting their independent activities, and how to help on words children don't know.

Sheila will welcome a Master's Candidate in her classroom to help the children while they are working individually and also to conduct conferences part of the time. Also, Gil Smith will send one of his fifth graders to be in Sheila's room to help with word attack.

I reminded Sheila that learning to take responsibility is often a slow process, and that it must be guided carefully by the teacher. I suggested that she be careful to use questions like "What are you doing?," "Why did you do it that way?" "Why did you do that?", "What are you going to do next?," etc., rather than telling the child what to do. When the teacher tells the child over and over she is taking the responsibility for the child's behavior. We want the child to begin to take this responsibility.

January 21

Sheila, Sandy Sutor and I met today for about half an hour to discuss individualized reading. Sandy will begin working with Sheila during some of her reading periods. She will help children with unknown words, with selection of appropriate books, and as time goes on will probably conduct conferences as well. I'll provide her with readings on individualized reading.

Sheila had developed a check sheet based on the basal reading series. She'll refer to this periodically to assure that skills are not being overlooked. She asked for suggestions about revising the checklist.

Sheila's main concern today was how to get children to prepare for conferences. Some children are prepared one time and not another. It was suggested that she would probably need to remind children often about what is expected of them. Daily planning with the children as a class and also in individual conferences is essential. She will try to circulate around the room in between conferences, to help settle some children and to help others with difficulties.

January 27

Suggestions to Sheila:

1. Responsibility requires careful training. Teacher must give children only as much responsibility as they can handle.

2. Teacher may have to make specific assignments of books sometimes for some children. I emphasized leading the child to see that a book is too difficult, rather than *telling* him it is.

3. I suggested that Sheila begin to accumulate a file of worksheets and to organize them according to skills. She plans to choose appropriate pages from the basal series duplicating masters. She will have

an aide run off and file the ones she selects.

Sheila is eager to have Sandy Sutor work with her in the project.

February 4

Sheila reports that her children are reading and enjoying it.

Sandy has been observing Sheila's conferences to get an idea of how to proceed.

Sandy will begin to hold conferences with some of the children.

Some children are still coming to conferences unprepared. They are being asked why they did not prepare and are sent back to their seats.

Independent seatwork activities are being developed.

February 18

Sheila was concerned about low test scores in context clues and comprehension on the first pre-primer. She questioned advice she had received that she have the children repeat the pre-primer just completed. As an alternative, I suggested she move ahead into the next pre-primer and provide extra instruction in the low areas.

Sheila still finds security in holding to the basal readers, but is meeting her two higher reading groups less often.

She is particularly pleased with the enthusiasm of the children for conferences. More of the children are preparing more adequately. Some still need additional guidance in selection of books and appropriate activities.

Sheila was reminded of the need to repeat procedures patiently with children who have adjusted more slowly to individualized reading.

May 5

Nearly all the children were signing up for conferences voluntarily and coming well prepared.

When Francis came unprepared he was sent back to his desk to get ready. A half-hour later he had a good conference with the teacher.

Some activities available to children have been put away. A smaller number was made available each day, and they were being changed more regularly.

Sheila is still carrying on part of her basal reading program. This seems to have increased the amount of work she has to do in trying to direct the part of reading instruction tied to the basals and at the same time conduct conferences with individual children.

Sheila reported that most of the children were selecting materials that were of appropriate difficulty for them.

Sheila would like some additional help in improving her techniques for conducting conferences. Using thought-questions was emphasized again.

Many of the children seemed to be improving their use of phonics through practice and help from their peers.

Most of all, Sheila reports, the children are enjoying reading.

Summing Up

Mrs. Reback had started out the year with a basal reading program and to some degree she had continued using the basals for most of the year. As she progressed through the year, Mrs. Reback was able to incorporate the essential elements of individualized reading into her reading program. Specifically, she was able to involve the children in regular periods of sustained reading, which she had not done previously. For periods sometimes exceeding twenty minutes these first graders were involved in quietly reading and reacting to books. The children were becoming more independent toward the end of the year in selecting library books and in choosing worthwhile activities to do during work periods. The enjoyment of the children was indicated both by their continued reading and their desire to talk with their teacher and others about books they had read.

Mrs. Reback was particularly pleased with the children's positive reactions. Her end-of-year evaluation of what she had done indicated that in future teaching she would emphasize individualized reading even more.

Some Recommendations for Individualizing

As a result of this project, some recommendations can be made to other teachers planning to individualize reading instruction.

1. Spend much time during the first month of school setting

the atmosphere of cooperation and self-help. This is essential.

2. Spend school time in uninterrupted silent reading. Begin this with short enough periods so that no one is likely to interrupt. Gradually increase the time to ten to twenty minutes.

3. Encourage sharing of what has been read. An excellent way to do this is for the teacher to share some of what she has read.

4. Permit partnership reading, especially in primary grades. One child reads to another either from a book the partners are sharing or from each one's individual choice.

5. Encourage the child's thinking. Talk about ways a child might find an answer to a specific question, rather than always giving the answer.

Some Thoughts on Change

Several thoughts relevant to changes in teachers' behaviors have evolved as a result of this project.

1. *Teachers need support.* In this case, the teacher was anxious to try to improve her teaching and was willing to expend the extra energy. All she needed was guidance and strong support for breaking away from traditional procedures.

2. *Teachers need help when they need help.* In this case, I was in the school regularly, able to spend time in Mrs. Reback's classroom, and able to meet her when she had a planning period. The availability of help provided encouragement for her to continue.

3. *Teachers need time.* When we expect teachers to spend extra time developing special programs, it seems imperative to provide them with planning time within the school day. Mrs. Reback was willing to spend much of her own time, but most of our meetings took place during periods when her class was with a special teacher.

4. *Consultants should be experienced.* Another factor which seemed to weigh heavily in this project was the experience and background of the consultant. I had taught individualized reading in grades 3, 4, and 5. Knowing that at one time or other I had had to work through similar problems seemed to add to Sheila's confidence in the suggestions I made.

5. *Teachers must initiate change.* It should be emphasized here that this project in first grade reading was initiated by Mrs. Reback. It has appeared in much of our work that when the teacher really wants to make changes, changes occur. Unless the teacher is really interested in trying to improve, outside forces appear to be less likely to produce positive change.

INTRODUCING "FREE" READING PERIODS

by Theodore A. Mork

Having children read quietly for half an hour after returning from a weekly visit to the school library is not uncommon in elementary schools. Devoting as much as 30 minutes every day to silent reading is uncommon. But that is what has happened in several classrooms at Heman Street Elementary School this year. In some of the other classrooms children read for sustained periods two or three days a week. The length of the reading period varies, but the activity during the period does not. The only legitimate activity is silent reading.

As they began, most of the classes devoted short periods of time to silent reading. Gradually the time was increased, often at the request of children, until on some occasions as much as 45 to 60 minutes has been given over to silent reading. The most significant part in this activity is that children who have not previously exhibited any desire to read for even a few minutes at a time have now been reading for sustained periods of time. What appears to have happened is that these children have learned to like reading by being expected to spend uninterrupted periods of time doing just that. The results have been somewhat mixed, of course. Not all the children have become avid readers as a result. On the whole, however, the activity seems to have had a positive effect on the reading behavior of a majority of the children. Examples of children's responses are given later in this paper.

Rationale for Extended Periods of Silent Reading

Some teachers are reluctant to devote extended periods of time to silent reading, especially when there are so many reading skills as well as so many other elements in the curriculum that must be taught. And of course, the teacher's attitude toward the importance of *any* activity is the prime determiner of what activities are included in the school day. For a teacher to commit himself and his class to 30 minutes of silent reading daily requires certain basic changes in the teacher's conception of his role, and of the importance of sustained practice in silent reading.

Teachers *do* generally advocate that children read at home, outside of the classroom. But several questions arise: Where and how does a child read at home? How does a child get started doing enough reading to begin enjoying reading? What prerequisites must be met before the

child is able to develop a habit of reading? It is obvious that merely advocating that children read at home has not worked for many children. Making special outside reading assignments often does little to encourage reading for the sake of enjoyment and getting ideas from books.

A variety of factors prohibit children from practicing silent reading at home. Other activities become more interesting and exciting. Brothers and sisters playing or talking or quarreling, television, parents' projects about the home, adult and child visitors -- these are just a few of the distractions surrounding children at home. Unless the child has already developed a love for books and has found a quiet place for reading , it would appear unlikely that teachers' admonishments to read at home will have any significant effect.

If advocating outside reading does not produce readers, then what does? Let us look for a moment at children who are readers. What characteristics can we find in them that are not found in children who avoid reading?

First of all, the children whom we observe reading and enjoying it are often the better readers. A circular question might be asked: Are "readers" more proficient because they read so much or do they read so much because they are better readers? Let's assume for the moment that these are both cause and effect. Children who are initially successful in learning to read find a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction in their new ability. Because they are successful in converting printed symbols into sounds (and then thoughts), they are positively reinforced, both by the teacher's delight in hearing the child read aloud and from an intrinsic satisfaction in being "correct." Reading becomes an enjoyable activity. Like most enjoyable activities, it is continued. As the child meets old words repeatedly and attacks new words successfully, he feels good about himself. He practices more. The more he practices the more competent he seems to become.

This successful child finds more time to read than other children. Why? At least partly because of a rule of long standing in most elementary classrooms. "And what do we do when we finish our work?" "Read our library book." Fine, but who is it who finishes ahead of the other children and therefore gets extra time to practice reading? Obviously it's not the child who most needs the practice.

This is what the teacher must realize and subscribe to fully before he is willing to give up a half hour of teaching time daily. The teacher must be willing to allow everyone time for practice. He must sit back and let something happen. Devoting more time to practice in silent reading requires that the teacher see this kind of extended practice as every bit as valuable as having the child complete a workbook page or a dittoed sheet of skill exercises.

Most reading authorities agree that reading is a skill. We know that learning a skill requires practice. Consider the amount of time needed in actual practice in comparison to direct instruction in learning

to play tennis, or the piano. Some have suggested that the ratio should be as high as 80 per cent practice and 20 per cent instruction.

Some Concerns of Teachers

Many teachers have heard about this idea of sustained reading, and are almost convinced of its value, especially when they see it operating in another teacher's classroom. But they question the likelihood that it will work in their classes. Comments like these have been common: "I tried it, but it didn't work." 'My children are so immature that they just can't sustain their reading for more than a couple of minutes." "I have a couple of children who will spoil it for the others." "I tried it for a week, but it didn't work."

Why should some teachers be so enthusiastic about an activity and others so skeptical? Why might it not have been successful in some cases?

There are several reasons. In the first place, we know children do not change their behavior patterns overnight. They change gradually, and as a result of consistent expectations. Some teachers have not given the activity time to get going. Secondly, teachers have often not discussed the ground rules with the children, and then they have not worked out the trouble spots with them. Third, teachers often do not start with a short enough period. Five minutes may be plenty for the first few times. Then, with the help of a kitchen timer or alarm clock, the time can be gradually increased, as the children agree to see if they can continue their reading without interruption for an agreed-upon length of time. These are important factors. However, it should be remembered that the teacher's conviction that this is an important activity and his ability to convey this conviction to the children are essential to successful silent reading periods.

There is another factor closely related to the teacher's conviction. What is the teacher's role during the time children are reading? If he is really determined that the only legitimate activity during the period is silent reading, he has no alternative but to read himself. (Reading textbooks in preparation for forthcoming lessons is forbidden. The teacher should be reading something he enjoys, just like the children.) "But," the conscientious teacher says, "how can I justify just sitting and reading for that period of time?"

Two of the Heman Street teachers resolved this question for themselves. They took literally the suggestion to read. The period was for silent reading *only*. They tried it. They read books or magazines themselves. They ignored minor interruptions. They read and enjoyed it. They were assured that this is acceptable -- indeed necessary -- behavior on their part.

Because they were enjoying their reading, they found ways of sharing much of what they read with the children. This encouraged chil-

dren to want to share what they had read. Sometimes it was just a statement of a new idea a child got from his reading. Sometimes it involved retelling a particularly funny or unusual part of a story. These sharing periods were generally short, but when a child had something he considered worth sharing, he was encouraged to do so. Naturally, the sharing led to additional reading.

Allowing short periods of time for this informal sharing of ideas increased children's enjoyment of their reading. It also served to reemphasize the importance of this reading activity. And as these teachers became more and more convinced of the value of these periods of silent reading for the children, they began to feel better about joining in the activity themselves.

It should be pointed out that instead of reading himself the teacher could be busy with related activities, such as helping children with difficult words or quietly discussing a child's reading with him.

Effect on the Children

Children's enjoyment of the reading period was observed by the teachers in a variety of ways. Children read books. They continued reading for longer periods of time. Most of them became too busy to be disturbed by minor interruptions. Because of pressures from peers not to interrupt this important activity, even the normally troublesome children began to pay more attention to their reading. The more time they spent in serious silent reading, the more they began to get ideas and information from books. The more this happened the more they read.

In classrooms where the expectations were clear to the children, the majority have expressed in one way or another happiness with the silent reading plan. Some specific examples of children's written reactions will serve to emphasize their feelings. Note that a few feel uncomfortable with so much freedom; they worry about not doing the workbook exercise or prefer the shorter, more structured reading lesson.

> "I like this kind of reading, because you don't have to do what you're told, like I mean he doesn't tell you what to read. He don't pick out a book and say read it. He lets us go to the library to get our own book."
>
> "I like it because if you get a book out that you do not like, all you have to read is about 20 pages and take it back."
>
> "I like the way we read because if you are in a book that is too hard or too easy, you can get a book that is just right."
>
> "I like it. You can read what you want. Without someone telling you what to read. Nobody to tell you "Do

not read that book, because you are supposed to read the other. Nobody telling you to read that story."

"The regular reading is all right, too, but you don't have any chance to read what you want."

"The regular reading is better for you because you have to do your workbook."

"When I have to read for 25 minutes I get bored. Maybe other people don't, but I do. I don't always. Only when I don't read a good book. I like basic reading better."

"What I like about it is that you don't have to go up to the front of the room. When we go up to the front, we have to read out of the same book."

"I think reading by yourself is better because you feel alive to read what you want to read. When you read by yourself, you can read more. You can read more books than the same old *Sky Lines* or *High Roads*, or even *Bright Peaks*."

"I think it is good because some people like to read murder stories and some like to read adventure stories. What I mean is they get to choose what kind of reading fits them best."

"I like to read about different things. I don't like to read in *Roads to Everywhere*, because I don't like the stories. I like to get books to read."

It is obvious from the above that children appreciate being free to read from materials they have selected themselves. It is also evident that they enjoy the freedom to read a variety of types of reading matter. Many of the children have expressed pleasure in being allowed to read on one topic in depth. For many of the children, the end of silent reading periods is not greeted joyfully. A comment from one fifth grade teacher is appropriate:

"For the first time I can remember, pupils in my class are disturbed and frustrated if they have to stop reading. They want to read, read, read. They are learning to finish whole books."

Regular sustained reading periods seem to have had a calming effect on some children. Because they have begun to enjoy reading (many of them for the first time), they have been serious about their use of the reading period. The atmosphere in the classroom during this time indicates a calm, relaxed, good feeling about what is going on.

Note of Caution

Silent reading periods should not be interpreted as a substitute for reading instruction. Reading skills must be taught. In the case of the teachers referred to here, most of the reading instruction during the year was from basal readers, with emphasis on additional materials that children could choose from, and occasional private conferences between child and teacher about what the child was reading.

But in addition to instruction, children need practice in applying reading skills. Some of the practice can be accomplished using workbooks and worksheets based on specific skills. However, it is in the actual reading of self-selected books that the skills of reading are practiced in the most meaningful and enjoyable way.

MINI COURSES:

EVALUATION OF A CURRICULAR INNOVATION

AT HEMAN STREET SCHOOL

by John Dopyera

This report of the mini courses with which Heman Street teachers experimented during the second half of the school year is largely drawn from a post-hoc evaluative study conducted by the teachers under the guidance of John Dopyera of Syracuse University Department of Psychology, an independent consultant on evaluation. Appended to Mr. Dopyera's more formal report is a brief description of one such course written by Chris Paully Mattern, who was assisting in the program as a master's candidate on the EPDA staff.

MINI COURSES: AN OVERVIEW

The mini courses were begun during the first part of the second school semester (February '70) and ran for 17 consecutive weeks. The idea for the mini courses came from teachers' discussions concerning a way to solve the "dragging afternoon" problem. It was felt that there was a need for program ideas which would develop and sustain more motivated pupil involvement particularly during afternoons. Eight of the third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers regularly conducted mini courses during the 17 weeks. Four other staff members conducted a few minis on an irregular basis.

A "mini course" was typically a 45-minute afternoon period during which a teacher taught a subject of interest to himself such as "Bones of the Body," "Middle Ages" or "Ghost Stories." Pupils from grades three through six selected one or two courses each week or two from the topics offered. A limit of twenty children was set for each.

Teachers typically taught two minis each afternoon during a two-week period. The sessions, a part of the regular school day, were scheduled from 1:00 to 1:45 and 1:45 to 2:30 P.M. Some variations were used on occasion such as one week periods instead of two and double-sessions devoted to a single topic.

During the 17-week period, the eight teachers developed and presented a wide range of mini courses. Teachers decided which minis were to be offered during a given period and distributed descriptions and signup sheets to the pupils during the latter part of the preceding week. To assure equal opportunity for students in making selections, each classroom

was divided into groups which were rotated as to which had first choices. The pupils in a group which had the first chance at selection were virtually assured of participating in their first choice; children in groups choosing later sometimes had to accept second or third choices. New minis got underway on Mondays.

The mini topics were announced without identifying the teacher who would be responsible for the course. Teachers reported, however, that within a couple of weeks pupils could identify the teacher from their knowledge of the teacher's interests.

A survey of the mini course titles shows that the subject field most frequently tapped was social studies. Children studied various cities and states in the United States, including their own county Onondaga, but they also ranged far afield to Sub-Sahara Africa, Ireland, and Canada. Other topics related to social studies were geography as science, U. S. government, economics, archeology, sociology, pioneer transportation, as well as short histories of such topics as music and clothing.

Courses related to communications also appeared frequently. Some of these focused on skills development, but others were more broadly conceived. Some of the titles in this category were Creative Writing, Dictionary Fun, Ghost Stories, The Newspaper, Letter Writing, Radio Broadcasting, Story Swapping, and TV Workshop.

Many minis were related to science and mathematics. Some of these were based on current social problems such as ecology and pollution; some focused on health, child care and grooming. Others were related to basic science offerings, including such titles as Sound, Ornithology, Insects and Bugs, Astronomy, and Magnetic and Electrical Forces. For children interested in mathematics, there were minis devoted to geometry, arithmetic skills, graphs and charts, and math puzzles.

The arts were represented by offerings in skits and drama, music, sketching, sculpting, poetry, folk music, chorus, and dancing.

A final category includes hobbies and recreation. Coin collecting, camping, golf, fishing, woodworking, international cooking, and knitting were among the choices offered in this category.

General Objectives

In the planning period which preceded launching this second semester program, the teachers had specified general objectives and had listed expected outcomes in terms of pupils' behaviors. The latter were categorized under (a) social skills (b) language development (c) work-study skills. The general objectives below are quoted from duplicated materials prepared for early work sessions by the eight teachers involved.

1. Generating childrens' interest through exploration.
2. Establishing environments conducive to reading, writing, listening and speaking.
3. Creating an atmosphere enabling children to carry responsibility and at the same time build self-control.
4. Structuring of the program sufficiently so it does not disintegrate.
   a. Group decision-making.
   b. A balance of the curriculum to be shown through involvement of each course in many areas of learning; i.e., social science, science, language, math and the humanities.
5. Developing a helping atmosphere among faculty where interests are shared and help is given.
6. Implementing and integrating afternoon interest groups into morning skill areas.

Evaluation

This experiment with mini courses was the Heman Street teachers' first attempt to break out of the traditional pattern of the self-contained classroom. For them and for their pupils the plan was indeed innovative, involving as it did cross-age grouping and electives for both pupils and teachers. It seemed sensible, therefore, to experiment with topics, teaching strategies, and logistic details relatively free from concerns with formal evaluations of pupils' growth in measurable skills or knowledge. Instead, in this first stage of free experimentation the focus of evaluation fell on teachers' reactions to the overall plan and the success of individual mini courses and on their subjective judgment of the effectiveness of the courses for different kinds of pupils.

In the late spring, then, the teachers met for a series of discussions and, with the assistance of EPDA personnel, reviewed and reevaluated the objectives set up at the beginning of the program. These were generally free and frank discussions; their essence as formulated by the writer is reported in the paragraphs below. In addition to these staff discussions, the writer had also recourse to evaluation forms filled out by each teacher as he tried to estimate changes that had occurred in his five "best" and five "poorest" students since the beginning of the mini courses. This form is reproduced on pages 75-77.

The teachers identified the following beneficial effects on students resulting from the 17-week mini course program. They agreed that the mini courses had

-- generated and maintained high levels of motivation;

-- provided opportunities for involvement with varied high-interest materials;

-- increased the opportunities for children to interact

in purposeful ways with a variety of other children, including those of different ages;

-- encouraged children's decision-making about their own learning and expenditure of time;

-- stimulated teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction, especially task-relevant communication;

-- helped children to develop insights into their own interests through the need for decision-making and feedback;

-- involved many children in library research and thereby provided practice in research skills;

-- provided a setting in which dependent children were eased into new settings and roles;

-- provided opportunities for students to interact with adults other than their regular teacher, thus easing transition into the departmentalization of the middle school.

In considering the positive effects of the mini courses on themselves, the teachers pointed out as the chief advantage the fact that the minis allowed them to use their own strengths as people, developing topics out of their own knowledge and personality styles. The mini courses, they said, provided an optimal setting for teaching units they were interested in to students who had chosen to participate. The teachers also noted how much they themselves had learned in preparing their courses and commented on the increased communication among them, their enthusiasm, and sharing of ideas. They liked the possibilities inherent in the mini course structure for team teaching since the setting allowed teaming when desired but didn't demand it. Other advantages which they noted were the opportunities afforded for diagnosing children's interests and capacities to participate under various learning arrangements. Finally, they found the mini courses permitted flexible presentation of topics from the content areas and, more important, allowed for the development of language arts in diversified and effective ways.

Although the advantages of the minis were clearly numerous and valuable (in the teachers' eyes), they also expressed dissatisfaction with some elements of the programs. There seemed to be general agreement that children in the mini courses had fewer opportunities to practice listening skills than they had in the regular classroom, probably because they were more often engaged in reading, writing, and discussing, and the teachers talked less, at least to whole groups. It is interesting that the teachers posted this effect on the debit side, and they may not have been wholly serious when they did so.

There was, however, genuine concern that the courses provided too little structure for some dependent younger children and for some who were lacking in task-orientation. They said that they were unable to motivate

some children who remained as passive in the mini courses as in the regular classroom and they worried about some whom they described as "fooling around." From these comments it is clear that the mini courses, while contributing to greater motivation for many children, were clearly not a panacea for the educational problems of all children.

In the writer's judgment, based on interviews with all the personnel involved, three other problems also need consideration in planning future mini courses. The first reflects, perhaps, the attitudes and habits of teachers: there was still a great deal of teacher direction retained in the minis, despite the trend toward less one-way teacher-to-pupil communication. A second problem was that the teachers felt themselves hampered by lack of appropriate supplies and materials. One reason for this was that the ways in which minis were scheduled allowed insufficient lead time for planning, preparing, and procuring worthwhile resources. There were some doubts expressed about what constituted an optimum time not only for preparation but for implementation and follow through. Finally, the third area of concern was the limited communication with parents about the goals and values of the mini courses. At least one parent had raised questions and nothing had been done to alleviate possible parental worries that their children "weren't being pushed" sufficiently in the new program.

The process used to determine the characteristics of successful mini courses was to draw comparisons with those considered least successful. It was quite evident that each teacher was aware of which minis were "great" and which were "busts." The teachers were also aware of the differences of viewpoints at times between themselves and their students on how successful certain minis were.

The teachers generally agreed that the more successful minis had these characteristics: (1) There was a prime focus on concrete experiences, the posing of down-to-earth problems, and the availability of real materials. (2) There was active involvement of the pupils in planning, building, touching, telling, asking, experimenting, doing. (3) The content was made meaningful through a constant interchange of questioning, considering, clarifying--all in a spirit of enthusiasm.

As noted above, the teachers thought the mini approach was least successful for younger children. "Younger" evidently referred to both the chronologically younger and to some of the older but more dependent children. Boys were thought to appreciate the minis slightly more than girls.

As the teachers reviewed the objectives set before the program began (see page 67), they rated the minis high for realizing language arts objectives in meaningful contexts. Some of the other objectives considered especially well served by the mini structure included generating interests, building independence, encouraging decision-making skills, producing an increased number of additional informal learning situations, and promoting faculty interaction.

While most of the teachers and the principal seemed to wish to move from a traditional, lock-step, academically focused program, no consensus existed among the teachers on how far to go and at what rate. Although many of the consequences of the mini effort were seen as desirable, the idea of expanding the concept to a full-day non-graded program or of otherwise substantially increasing pupil involvement and responsibility in program planning created some ambivalence. This was true even for those teachers thoroughly sold on the afternoon mini program.

There is little doubt that for persons valuing much teacher-pupil collaborative activity, much pupil involvement in self-selected activities and learning by doing the mini concept is very appropriate and might perhaps be expanded to advantage. The extent to which all teachers at Heman Street were equally happy with these outcomes is not, however, completely clear.

Looking Ahead

The evaluative process described here took place at the end of the school year, as the 17-week trial period was drawing to a close. Neither the teachers nor this observer was completely satisfied that the review and discussion of what had happened, nor the check list evaluation of five "best" and five "poorest" students (see Fig. 1), yielded an accurate, penetrating, rounded analysis of what had happened to teachers and students in the 17 weeks. Admittedly subjective, and for many reasons desirably so, the evaluation still left many doubts and questions about how the teachers really assessed the quality of their experience, to say nothing of the changes that may or may not have taken place in the students. Nevertheless, there was a clear consensus that the program should be continued, with modifications, in the fall.

Looking ahead, then, to continuing the program in the fall, and to a four-week pre-school workshop that would allow time for planning, the teachers decided that a major task in setting up the new program would be to specify now the kinds of questions for which they would seek more objective answers next year than had been available to them during this trial period. Accordingly, they drew up the following questions, recognizing that these would be expanded and modified as their summer plans and the fall implementation of them developed:

1. Did participation in teaching the minis influence the teaching practices or procedures of teachers during the remainder of the school day?

2. Did teachers actually interact with children in any different style (with regard to controlling, sanctioning, facilitating, etc.) in minis than in other teaching?

3. How much time was actually spent in preparation for minis in contrast to a regular afternoon program?

4. Did children make comparable or greater gains in academic skills and knowledge during the semester the minis were included in the program as compared with a regular semester?

5. What effect did the "change of pace" of group and teacher in minis have on children's intra-class relationships, relationships with own teacher?

6. Were new social skills developed as a result of adjusting to and interacting with new groupings of children and teachers?

7. Did children's rate of participation (talking, doing, reading, writing, etc.) actually increase in the afternoon minis in contrast to regular afternoons?

8. Did participation in the minis influence children's behavior outside the mini situation?

Summary

This report has attempted to document the mini-course effort at Heman Street School from the impressionistic perspectives of the teachers and principal and EPDA consultants. The few available records have been considered and are appended for reference. (Not included here. Instead a description of one experience is appended below.) From this information and from notes recorded at the evaluation sessions, evaluative statements have been formulated and questions for future evaluations proposed.

Although there are no hard data to substantiate conclusions, there would seem to be no doubt that participation in the mini courses was exhilarating for most pupils and teachers. Outcomes would generally be characterized as very positive. If mini courses are continued, the writer believes that much of value in the way of educational innovation can be anticipated.

A MINI COURSE ON FOLK SONGS

by Chris Paully Mattern

It seemed hard to believe that the room was so quiet, considering that just a few moments ago these were the children who had been running around outside and talking up a storm in the halls. It sounds corny, but a terrible fear hit me: what if they didn't get one thing out of what we were about to do? Well, I mentally crossed my fingers and began...

"What do you think folk music is, anyway?"

"Music written by folks."

"But what kind of folks? What kind of music?"

Blank faces.

It was obvious that they had never considered the idea, so we went into a lengthy discussion of what folk music and songs actually are. We talked about who made up folk songs and when they were written down.

"Could we make up folk songs?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because we're not folks."

Back to a little more discussion, and we finally decided that, yes, we could make up folk songs, but that real folk songs are passed along from one generation to another over many years. Real folk songs were not written down originally, but today's "folk singers" write new "folk-type" songs as well as record old, true versions. We discovered that among the earliest folk songs from our country were those sung by the slaves, and we decided to start with them on Tuesday.

The next day our discussion went something like this:

"Who were the slaves?"

"People in the South."

"What did they do?"

Not much response on this, and to the question of how these people got to America, I got very puzzled looks. "What do you mean, 'how

did they get here'?" So we went to the library for a half hour in search of books they could read about the early days of our country and how black slaves came to work on the plantations. When we returned to the room we learned "Go Down, Moses"...

"Why would slaves make up a song like this?"

"They were sad."

"Why were they sad?"

"They had to work hard."

"Why else were they sad?"

Surprisingly, I got the answer I was looking for--just like the Jews who were imprisoned by the Pharoah, the blacks were imprisoned by the white people. This, I felt, was a rather difficult analogy for a child to draw, and he did it surprisingly well. We sang the song again before the period ended.

The next day we devoted to individual projects. The children were:

--reading about Negro history;

--writing their own stories about slaves; some were illustrating stories.

--writing a folk song such as slaves might have sung.

We set one particular song to music, and the children were really good at it. One child has a natural gift for music, and it was her inspiration that got the other children moving. I was totally pleased with the results, and the song, "We Slaves," is not a bad piece of music.

On Thursday the children finished up whatever they were working on, and then told the rest of the class what they had been doing.

The types of projects were pretty well balanced, although there may have been a few more children writing stories. Everyone had something to show and the results were satisfying on the whole.

We decided that the next folk song study we'd try would be cowboy songs.

The next time we met, the librarian substituted for me, and the class saw two filmstrips and started some research on cowboys.

The next day we discussed what cowboys do.

"He takes care of cows."

"How?"

"On a ranch."

"What does he do with them?"

The concept of driving herds was difficult to draw out, surprisingly, I thought, considering the assumed influence of TV.

We discussed why the cowboy made up songs, and what differences we might expect to find between the songs of the slaves and cowboy songs. We learned "Git Along, Little Dogies" to finish the lesson.

On Wednesday the children again went to the library and worked on projects about cowboys similar to those they had done on slave songs. On Thursday we spent more time on the projects. Some children decided to try their hand at their own folk songs. We also learned Shirlene's song, "We Slaves."

The last day was spent in an effort to tie up loose ends. Some of the children recorded what they had written, and all told the rest of the class what they had done. We went over the songs we had learned, and some of the children put their finished projects on the hall bulletin boards.

I was pretty well satisfied with the unit. The children produced much more than I had hoped for, which is always gratifying. I had no difficulty with getting across to different age levels; as a matter of fact, some of the third graders were sharper than the fifths. Discipline was something of a problem; one group of boys were pretty disruptive, and because I didn't know how to handle them properly, I allowed them to take time away from the rest of the class. Lack of time prohibited me from doing as much as I had wanted. I had hoped to do more with composing our own songs. But, all in all, it went very well. Most of the children worked hard, and worked well. Above all, I think they enjoyed what they had done.

DIRECTIONS

1. Think of the five students in your homeroom who entered school last fall with the MOST academic and social skills. Write their initials at the top of each page in the five columns under MOST.

2. Think of the five students in your homeroom who entered school last fall with the LEAST academic and social skills. Write their initials at the top of each page in the five columns under LEAST.

3. Read each item. As you read each item indicate the amount of change in the direction of the item which has occurred in each child since the beginning of the mini courses. Use the following scale:

++	a lot of change
+	some change
0	no change noticeable
-	some reversal
--	reversed a lot
dk	don't know/can't answer

4. When you have finished rank each item (in the left margin) as to its relative importance as a criterion for evaluating the mini courses via the effects they may have had on children. Rank the items by placing a 1 by the item which in your opinion is the most important criterion, continuing to 32 for the least important.

	MOST					LEAST				
works independently, effectively										
can choose a project										
behaves autonomously in library										
begins work promptly										
concentrates on work at hand										
completes assignments										
works cooperatively in groups - (shares ideas and materials)										
takes responsibility for getting group projects done										
sees implications of what he is doing										
takes care of manipulative materials										
demonstrates interest by questioning, listening to teacher and peers, answering questions posed by teacher and peers										
shows interest in course outside of classroom										
gets excited about learning something										
expresses feelings										
expresses personal opinions										
helps other students										
is happy and enjoys school										
relates well to younger and older children										
talks with other students										
provides information in conversations										

	MOST								LEAST			
describes/discusses something in own words												
maintains attention during discussion												
raises pertinent questions												
uses reference tools (encyc/dict/ atlas)												
reads for information and reports in own words												
summarizes main ideas from materials read												
outlines a few main ideas from the course (with sub-topics)												
writes imaginative reports												
written vocabulary is extensive												
speech vocabulary is extensive												
talks and writes coherently and in an organized way												
demonstrates self-evaluation techniques												
ADDITIONAL ITEMS												

WORKING ON WRITING

by April Rowland, Winanne Nelson, Roberta Brown

The following article, drawn from the logs of three master's candidates, illustrates the cooperative relationships which developed between the Heman Street teachers and the apprentices, usually to mutual advantage, resulting in increased service to the children. In this case, the three fourth grade teachers invited the apprentices to work with them to seek ways of improving the quality of children's writing. The month of February was devoted to this special emphasis.

To this point, the classes had had varying experiences with writing, reflecting the styles and expectations of three quite different teachers. Two classes had done a good deal of personal writing, without regard to standards of "correctness" and often without an audience. If a child did not want his paper read, he had only to write at the top, "Don't read." In one of the classes, this approach had resulted in increased fluency for most of the children. In the other class, freedom to choose other means of expression had led to diminished output in writing.

The third class had had few opportunities for personal writing but had concentrated instead on topics consistently set by the teacher. Most of their writing took the form of reports for social studies and science. These children wrote less frequently than the children in the other two classes and they were held to high standards of "correctness."

In preparation for the project, the master's candidates read widely in professional books and journals, selecting ideas to stimulate writing that might be characterized as both personal and communicative and is often called "creative." Because of the short duration of the project, they made no attempt at objective measurement of the children's writing. Their purpose was first of all to learn what they could about fourth graders' attitudes toward writing and how these attitudes affect the writing process. Like the classroom teachers, they wanted to study the children's problems and to discover how these were alleviated, or complicated, by different ways of motivating writing. As they struggled to develop and maintain interest in writing, they hoped also to discover ways of improving children's understanding and use of accepted conventions.

The students' logs reflect not only what happened in the fourth grade classrooms, but perhaps more significantly, what they and the

teachers learned about how children respond to motivational devices that are frequently recommended in professional books and journals.

The "High Achievers"

The fourth grade I chose to work with was the "highest" of the three in terms of past achievement. The teacher had set up the class with fairly tight control. Therefore, not even my first day in the classroom brought out any behavior problems. Instead I had an extremely cooperative atmosphere in which to work with a group of children who had been writing well -- in the sense of "correctly."

As I began to introduce writing situations, the only real problem I faced was that they were unfamiliar with writing stories. In social studies and science, they had often written reports, using reference materials. But when it came to writing a *story*, that was hard for them at first.

My initial purpose had been to use creative writing as a means of improving the mechanics of the children's writing, but this was later revised as I saw the reactions of the children.

I intended to provide stimuli to which the children would respond. Then I would use their responses as a basis for teaching them (1) to form sentences rather than running their thoughts together; (2) to begin a new paragraph when they begin a new idea; and (3) to use correct verb tenses.

I began by administering a questionnaire on their attitudes toward writing. Most of the children indicated that they liked to write reports rather than stories, probably because that is what they were used to writing. Most of them wanted to decide for themselves what to write about, instead of being assigned a topic. Feelings of confidence ranged all across the scale, and both positive and negative attitudes appeared.

Monday

Stimulus: Box with blue light shining on day-glo pink paint, foil, and bright objects. Lights in room turned off and eerie music playing. The children were asked how they would feel if they woke up and found themselves inside the box. What would they do?

Response: They wrote very short stories composed of short, choppy sentences. The sentences were usually mechanically correct. They seem not to know when a new paragraph should begin.

Expressing themselves about an imaginative situation was very hard for them. (Understandable -- quite a shift from report writing about Lincoln!) Several children asked me if they could write a report instead of a story.

My Reactions: Because they seem so unfamiliar with writing about their feelings and ideas, I think they simply need more opportunities to gain confidence. It would seem worthwhile to follow many of E. E. Smith's ideas as expressed in "Procedures for Encouraging Creative Writing"; e.g., (1) encourage them to write from their own interests and needs; (2) provide rich experiences about which a child can express himself; (3) provide abundant time for writing; (4) provide freedom from fear; (5) develop skill in mechanics without sacrificing spontaneity; (6) share the end products of writing.[1]

I plan to concentrate less on mechanics and more on creative expression. I feel that that is what these kids need most now.

Wednesday

Objective: The children will be able to write stories of at least two paragraphs, beginning a new paragraph when they begin a new idea.

Procedure: Discuss the papers they wrote on Monday and project one on the overhead. Ask them how it could be improved. Emphasize the need for a new paragraph when a new idea starts. Show the same story as it would look with two paragraphs. Ask them to write something about their afternoon mini courses -- what they liked, disliked, funny happenings, etc. Make at least two paragraphs.

Response: They were able to discuss paragraphs and seemed to understand that you start a new paragraph when you start a new idea. They liked having one of their own papers used as an example. Almost all of them wrote two good paragraphs. There were several who had a very hard time getting started.

My Reactions: Continue on paragraphs. Since mechanics isn't really such a problem, give them a chance to try writing about their own feelings, problems.

Thursday

Objectives: The children will begin a new paragraph when they begin a new idea. They will write about their own feelings and problems.

Stimulus: A magic genie on tape says that he has come to help them with a problem they might have. He asks them to write a story

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[1]E. E. Smith, "Procedures for Encouraging Creative Writing in the Elementary School," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 1942. Summarized by Neal Edmund. "Writing in the Intermediate Grades," *Elementary English*, XXXVI (November 1959), pp. 491-501.

telling how they would change their lives to make them different from what they are now. He wants two paragraphs.

Responses: This topic and presentation appealed to them, but many of them still hesitate to write about their *feelings*. Almost all of them seem to understand paragraphs.

My Reactions: Continue having them write about themselves. One child commented, "Every day you bring in some new modern invention to help us write." But I am beginning to feel that rather than the stimulus being the important part of getting children to write, it is more important to merely give them the opportunity and time to get used to writing.

Monday

Stimulus: The genie comes back and asks them to pretend that they are someone other than themselves. How would they feel? What would they do?

Response: Again the children were hesitant about getting started. But once they got going, I got some good reactions, ranging from being their teacher to being a space man.

These children have very mixed feelings at this point about writing, but they are beginning to enjoy writing about a rather loose topic. Several children asked me today if they could write about something else. That's a step in the right direction.

My Reactions: I see the teacher's role as being to encourage good writing by using interesting stimuli to draw out creative ideas -- but also leaving each child free to write about something else if he chooses.

Wednesday

I let them write about anything they wanted, and from the majority the responses were good. Many people who have done a great deal of work with children and writing would agree with this idea. G. R. Clark, in "Writing Situations to Which Children Respond," [2] said that children wrote about themselves -- their feelings and emotions -- they responded freely and usually achieved highest quality. This idea is echoed in the literature of the 60's also.

One boy asked me if he could actually write about anything he wanted to. I had only about five children who were unable to

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[2] In *Elementary English* in March, 1954.

think of anything to write about, but when I gave them a little help, they did write something. Their papers were good, but I was especially encouraged by their attitudes.

Monday

Stimulus: I showed a movie, *Hippity Hop*, to see what kind of response I could get. They loved the movie, but when I asked them to write something about what they had seen, I got completely negative reactions. Most of them wrote very little, and some wrote nothing.

My Reaction: Maybe I have been concentrating too much on the stimulus. It seems that the more impressive the stimulus is the less writing it brings forth from the children. Their best writing so far came when they wrote about their problems and when they wrote about anything they wanted.

Wednesday

The children again wrote about anything they wanted. Several children commented that this was the kind of writing they liked to do best.

At this, the end of my third week, many of the children are doing a lot of writing on topics of their own choice. The more writing they do, the easier it is for them. Mechanics aren't such a great problem, but they need as many writing experiences as possible to help them feel comfortable. There are still several children who do not write. Perhaps simply more time is needed for them to feel free to write and not to be afraid of failure.

From now on, Mr. M. will hold each child responsible for writing at least half a page on a topic of his own choice every day sometime during the morning. These writings will be kept in individual folders within easy access of both the children and the teacher. The teacher will keep a loose check just to make sure that everyone is doing some writing.

Two Weeks Later

When I went into the classroom today, several children eagerly volunteered to show me their writing. One boy had written a five-page mystery story, and he was quite proud of it. As I went around the room,even those children who had written almost nothing when I had been presenting what I thought were stupendous stimulants, were now writing on their own. The writing was almost always about themselves. And the mechanics of their writing, such as sentence structure and paragraphs were just as good as, if not better than, when we had specifically been working on them.

A magazine put together by the class might be a natural follow up for the writing they have been doing and for the attitudes they have been developing.

The real clincher to this tale came one day when I was downtown shopping. I ran into a boy from that class. He had always been the thorn in my side because he just wouldn't write. The most I had been able to get him to write was two sentences. On this day, though, he rushed up to me and asked when I was going to come to their class again and read the writing he had been doing! He said he had even written a *page* one time. And not only that, but he also told me about things other kids in the class had written. I was pleased that he was talking about his own writing, and also pleased that the children were obviously not fearful of showing their work to others in the class.

Wednesday

Stimulus: As soon as the class quieted down, I told them they would have a chance to do some acting. They were excited about it, but I quieted them down so that I could explain this situation. "Pretend you are a new kid in the neighborhood. You're at school and you don't know anyone at all." I chose three children to play old friends at school and one child to be the newcomer. The setting was the cafeteria at lunch time. Eventually everyone had a chance to be in a skit.

To stimulate conversation, the old friends asked the new boy his name, where he was from, what grade he was in, what he's having for lunch. In a later skit, they asked: "Do you know where the drugstore is?" "Do you know where the boys' bathroom is?" "Where do you live?" "Do you want to come to my house?" "When were you born?" "Are you a Boy Scout?"

Responses: Some of the children were then able to write about how they felt as the new child. In most cases, they wrote only the questions they had asked or that had been asked of them. Five children were unable to write anything. When Miss M. came back, she tried to help them by asking what new questions were in their minds. Still these five did not write. John, who was one of the five, later came down to the lunchroom, and without any further directions from me, was able to write for ten minutes about being the new boy in school.

My Reactions: I think they need more practice in role-playing and even more practice relating it to a written form. Part of the problem is that many of the children never experienced being in a new situation with no friends. What I intended to be a rather

commonplace situation turned out to be rather remote even though I chose the topic because Beth is moving to a new school tomorrow and shows signs of being nervous about facing this type of situation.

Monday to Friday

This week I decided to have individual conferences with the children. We pulled a desk and two chairs into the hall and reviewed papers from the folders. I primarily concentrated on the need for proofreading. Most of them were able to discover this without much prompting from me. Also, many of them need to work on sentence variety. Run-ons are also common problems. Each assured me he would be very aware of these weaknesses and would avoid them in future writing.

The first "stimulus-inspired" writing was quite successful. We darkened the classroom and showed a model of a mystery room containing some weird and spooky objects while strange-sounding music was being played. (That was the day we broke three tape recorders; I think the teachers were more stimulated than the children.) The children were told to write about what might happen to them if they found themselves in that room.

The children generally wrote vivid, although somewhat violent and morbid, stories about the room. In some of the stories, the reader could feel the fear the child was imagining. Many wrote that they would be killed or die. One boy went so far as to describe his fate after death: "Then when I rose I wood go to hell because I am always bad for my mother and sometimes for my father. But most of the time I give my mother trouble."

Another boy was more concerned with body than soul. "I would rot in the room. It would smell. . . . At last I would give up hope. I would die. No one could find me. I would be ther for ever. I would smell like a skunk."

Two boys approached the problem with mock seriousness, writing a good spooky story and then bringing it back to reality with a joke. One boy told of all the things he would do to escape. Finally -- "I would take a saw out of my sleeve and saw the tree. I got everything up my sleeve but the kitchen sink. I just remembered I put that in yesterday." Another boy wrote a very imaginative story and ended with, "Boy, them hodulums were giving me the works. That why I say its a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there."

Many children wrote that they would simply wait until their mothers and fathers rescued them. One highly organized boy wrote about the plan of action he would take while waiting for his parents to help.

> "I would keep those things what ever they are busy till my father and mother got there. To keep them busy I would let them chase me all around the room. Next I would keep going after them instead of them going after me. Then if my mother and father don't come I'll start fighting with them untill they get tired. After I would feed them all the great big carrot and would eat some of it myself."

Many of the stories were funny, imaginative, and often revealing. The excerpts presented here were from the more able students, however. I received quite a few papers which didn't make much sense because they were so poorly constructed. In general, the children had good ideas and felt free to express them but were unable to do so clearly because they had no control of the conventions. The problem now was to help them achieve this control, but to do this without stifling the creativity they were showing.

Summary

From these experiences, the teachers and their apprentices concluded that children in the fourth grade need a continuous balanced program in writing. The class that was considered "high achievers" needed far more frequent opportunities to write freely on their own ideas, drawing from their own experiences and expressing feelings as well as describing incidents. Exclusive emphasis on report writing had stifled their imaginations and personal expressiveness. At first, they had great difficulty in "getting started" and comments like "I can't think of anything to write," "I don't feel like writing" and "What shall I write?" were numerous. Motivational gimmicks seemed less successful with this group than a simple cultivation of confidence in their own ideas.

Report writing has its values, too, and should be retained in the total balanced program. This type of writing had received too little attention in the other two classes where the discipline of careful, accurate writing had been sacrificed to much freedom. The children in these classes were able to respond to higher expectations of accuracy and clarity. They needed instruction in composing -- in how to organize their ideas -- and in achieving sentence variety. They needed encouragement to try new words so that they would experience the satisfaction of giving sharper form to hazy ideas.

The class which had had the best prior experience with personal writing seemed to respond best to motivation to write imaginatively. These children needed more help with the conventions of writing than they had had, but they were more ready for this help than the class that had been allowed to choose **not** *to write.*

All three classes needed more opportunities to share their writing with each other and to develop their own standards of evaluation. One outcome of this brief writing project was the decision to provide more opportunities for class publications for which the children might select their own best contributions.

Another outcome was the realization that growth in writing takes time as well as active stimulation. The teachers resolved to find time daily for personal writing and sharing by eliminating some mechanical skills practice that had consumed "language arts periods." They would find additional time by using other curriculum areas to provide subjects for writing, not only for report writing but for personal reactions and observations. The mini courses would serve to stimulate much purposeful writing. Finally, they would continue to experiment with motivational techniques for "creative writing," judiciously selecting and repeating those which created a flow of ideas and rejecting any which proved artificial and false.

Although the relationships of reading and literature to the writing program are not evident in the logs, the teachers were aware that reading to children is a prime source of ideas. They were confident, too, that their pupils' expanding interests in reading as they developed more individualized or personal reading programs would also result in more writing.

Only one excerpt from the logs illustrates the relationship between oral language development and writing; e.g., the use of role-playing to precede writing. But the year-long and school-wide emphasis on oral language had also its contribution to make to these children's growth in the most difficult of the expressive arts, writing.

LANGUAGE THROUGHOUT THE INTEGRATED DAY

by Christine San Jose

Over the past few years, a great deal has been written about what's going on in progressive British primary schools. But surprisingly little has been set down about language development. We have seen something of language arts as a subject in the curriculum, especially samples of children's personal writing and photographs of drama. But what of language throughout the day? Is there anything in the actual set-up of the progressive schools in England that influences language development? Is there anything we might like to implement here? Would it be possible? These were the questions in my mind as I recently looked around primary schools in Leicestershire.

When possible, I arrived early in the morning and didn't leave until after a last cup of tea in the teachers' room at four o'clock. This was partly to hear the children's language not just during school work but before and between and after, the language they lived through the day with. Partly also it was because the more I saw of these schools the more anxious I became not to miss any clue to what made them work. And partly -- perhaps mainly -- it was because all the schools it was my good luck to visit were such happy, stimulating places that just being there seemed an excellent way to spend the day.

Let us start, then, at the beginning of the school day. The building the children are coming into might be anything from Victorian Gothic, through strung out nineteen-thirties' corridors, to bright modern activity areas surrounding a multipurpose assembly hall or a library and resource area. But once inside, the eye has no time to linger on the building, there is so much on the walls clamoring for attention. Art work is everywhere, fresh and exciting shapes, colors and materials. One infant school had turned the trick on its graceless tubes of corridor with an explosion of animal murals: the result of excursions to the zoo. From the drawing and painting and collage, you realized they had really looked at those animals and then must have followed up firsthand impressions with work in reference books.

That's the "integrated day" in action. Learning isn't fractured into separate, timetabled "subjects." "Art" isn't a "special," once or twice a week in a different room with a different teacher. It's one of the handy tools for exploring your thoughts and feelings, refining your knowledge, expressing it. This doesn't mean that form is always dictated by content, any more than vice versa; rather that the two are mixed from one end of the continuum to the other. So, at one end, the graphs, say, of different

heights in the class will not pretend to be other than informative; but even in infant classes they will be neat and pleasing to the eye, thus conveying their information with stimulating clarity. And at the other end of the continuum, in the entrance hall of a junior school was a fascinating foray into pop art. That particular display could clearly be seen as a pebble dropped into rippling waters, with pop art circles widening out over the walls of several other classes. This artwork had obviously entailed a considerable amount of time and thought and, it became apparent in many ways, language.

So far the examples of interest followed through, diligent expression of the consequent discoveries, have referred mainly to graphic art. These were immediately apparent on entering the schools. It didn't take long in the classrooms to realize how significantly the same attitude influenced the children's use of language. There was a class of forty 5- and 6-year-olds, for instance, where I couldn't check with the teacher (as courtesy and habit dictated) what the children were presently engaged in. She was away for the first two hours of the morning visiting a science display at the county teachers' advisory center. The teacher next door had looked in when school began to check for any difficulties, and now the children were getting on by themselves. There was a group working with clay, another group playing number games with play money, another writing in their story books; in brief, the activities we've already read about many times. What really excited this student of oral language is that the children were all very willing and able to explain what they were doing and why they had chosen that activity and what they thought they were learning from it and what they planned to do with the rest of the morning and how this followed on what they'd done yesterday and fitted in with their long-term plans. These incidentally were what in the States we would consider somewhat "underprivileged" children.

Let's look at two or three more examples before attempting to draw conclusions. I'll choose at random among the many that spring to mind. There was a group in a "reception" class (the newcomers, entering school the term they turn five) who were drawing kites to color and cut out for their mural. One little girl was drawing a rather small kite to one side of her paper. "Why don't you do a big one like mine?" asked the little boy opposite, showing her his. "I want to do one like Robert's," she explained, indicating her neighbor's, "with a boy holding the string. So I've got to leave room." "If you put the kite sideways, like this," Robert pointed out, "you can make it quite big and still have room for somebody holding it." (Again, less than affluent infants, forty of them, in a converted storeroom.) It's reasonable that children should talk like this over their drawing, but in my experience in lessons given by even an enlightened art teacher it's been rare to the point of nonexistence.

In a junior school, a small group of seven to nines in the painting corner were working with as many different techniques as there were children, pausing from time to time to inspect each other's with knowledgable interest, discussing the different techniques each had employed. In another junior class a ten-year-old girl was showing me

a book of her poetry and together we were quietly reading some of the poems aloud. "Read the one about the balloon," said her younger neighbor; "I like that one." But the ten-year-old demurred. "It's silly," she said, sincere and firm. The poem was pleasant enough, some ten lines, about a balloon floating up and into the distance and suddenly going Pop. We looked through her book of poems, all written when she felt like it, unhurried, and she pointed out the ones she didn't consider silly. From this we were able to sort out, (the writer, her younger neighbor and I), which was the discordant note in the balloon poem. It was, we eventually realized, the bursting. From the poems she still stood behind, it became clear that her mind was embarking on a consideration of the last one sees of things, of their end by fading, or returning to where they came from, disappearing from view. No bang; not even a whimper; just the going. The balloon had to just float away. Obviously this wasn't high level literary criticism! But certainly these two young girls were articulate enough to pursue a sophisticated inquiry to a satisfactory conclusion. With no more help than the tentative questioning of a genuinely interested adult they were on to the recognition within oneself of deep-felt problems and the expression of them in everyday speech and in art form.

What are the pertinent elements, then, in these various examples of language use? Basically, that the children are working with something they consider significant. They are therefore ready talkers and listeners in the frequent discussions of their work with the teacher. Ever since they have been in school, language has played an essential part for them in thinking through what they are doing, and in considering the most likely direction for further discovery. Now as they work on projects together, or on different interesting things side by side, they talk together about what they are doing. And so new sparks are struck, leading to more thinking through, more discussion. The teacher meanwhile is keeping close watch on all these developments, elucidating with questions, providing resources, so that one is constantly impressed by the purposefulness that intrinsically goes with them.

The first hour or so has passed by now in a busy hum of learning. Time for a cup of coffee in the teachers' room. In some schools the children please themselves when to take a break, in others they all go out for some twenty minutes or so. There isn't a great deal of supervision outside. These schools believe that the children can get on by themselves with their play as they can with their work.

If you've kept your ears sharpened so far in the classroom, you're likely to stay that way in the teachers' room; and it's worth it. The English enjoy talking. The topics under discussion frequently surprised me. In school after school they were talking shop, and with great enthusiasm. It wasn't for the benefit of the visitor. Once I'd been introduced, true enough, they'd talk my ear off. But often I'd slip in unannounced, quite frankly to eavesdrop on a usual break; and on several occasions heard a constructive general interchange touching on underlying philosophies, detailed implementations, examples, and sharing of ideas and techniques. All in great good humor and professional camaraderie.

Leicestershire's reputation attracts enthusiastic teachers, it's true, and many are excited, and very happy, to be doing what they are. They are not necessarily representative of teacher quality throughout the country, any more than the schools detailed here are run of the mill. I don't know if they ever could be. A well-established model can strengthen and support several weaker members, so that as the stronger teachers help the weaker ones the proportion of progressive schools in England can probably be expanded from its present estimated one third. But there is no doubt that the English successes I am trying to analyze, in order to sort out from them what we might implement over here, depend not only on the method of the integrated day, but also on considerable teacher competence and dedication. Nor is this quite the whole story. As I went from class to class, school to school, seeing so many widely different implementations of basically the same philosophy, I was trying to put my finger on what there was in common among the teachers who were obviously comfortable and constructive in working this way.

A characteristic of these classrooms is that it takes you some time to spot the teacher. The children are going about their business singly or in small groups here and there and the teacher is amongst them, at their level, talking with only one or two. Sometimes you think the teacher must have stepped out for something or other, since the children can carry on perfectly well by themselves, and then one of the heads looks up from peering into the fishtank or counting the bees and that's who it is. I learned early that although I was getting to distinguish the particular flavor of the different classrooms from a fairly brief observation, I couldn't predict at all what the teacher was going to look like. Age had nothing to do with it, for example, nor sex, nor personal neatness nor lack of it. But then as I talked with them -- the ones whose classrooms you could have spent a month in, there were so many good things to see, the children eager to explain and share -- I would notice the same characteristics recurring. The most apparent was a quiet delight in the children. It wasn't just that they trusted the children to forward their education; it wasn't just pride in what the children did in fact do and produce. They gave the impression of being open people, able to live with themselves and others without having to maintain defenses around a selected, censored world. So their eyes and ears were open to each individual child. They didn't miss the child's flash of insight when it came, the glimpse of some old ingredient in life through young eyes, an unexpected way of putting things together. They were infinitely capable of surprise, delighted in it, and were eager to share it with others. They reminded one of fond parents. "Oh you must hear this!" they'd say; or "Just look at that will you! Yes, of course, they did it all themselves -- I couldn't do anything half so good!"

During coffee break one evident aspect of this openness was the humor. I remember an impressively dignified lady, close to retiring age, quietly telling me what a shame I'd missed the entertainment in her room just now. Some freak chain of accidents had brought the pond-life tank crashing to the floor and there were floods over the book

corner carpet and tadpoles in the clay and the puppets speared by slivers of glass and they could hardly clear up for laughing.

"Mind you, nothing *sloppy*." That was what a headmaster said as he showed me round his village school. I was so busy listening to the recorder group and inspecting the medieval costumes the children had made and reading their stories of what the bold knights had been up to that I'd slightly lost the thread of the headmaster's conversation, and wasn't sure whether his proud paternal remarks referred to his own sons or to the children in his care. But in the middle of one delighted account of how they had done so-and-so (at the school, I now gathered) he laid a hand on my arm to insure full attention as he said, "But mind you: nothing *sloppy*." You didn't flit from flower to flower. You didn't finish with a piece of work till you'd done it to the best of your ability. Open to the children, yes; delighted by them even; but not abnegation of clearly perceived academic responsibility.

Coffee breaks spent listening to the teachers, then, with their articulate, professional sharing, furnished strong clues to the bases of the schools' success. They were a good post for observation also of that rare bird, the English principal. "We do so-and-so in such-and-such a way here," as one of them was explaining elsewhere, "because -- well because it pleases me that way. And around here I'm God." His charming self-deprecatory smile didn't alter the truth of it. Though in the frank daily interchanges of the coffee breaks, it was evident that the principals' success depended at least in part on receptive listening.

Most of the headmasters would start the account of their careers in the same place: "When I came out of the army . . . " And that's worth thinking about, the state of mind in which an intelligent young man would tackle his first job after years of compulsory obedience and tedium and danger and long hours for general puzzling. One told of finding himself responsible for some hundred and fifty children who had grown up in temporary huts outside the town; a cultural desert obviously, almost it seemed outside civilization. He had expected them to be wild, he said; but on the contrary, they crept crablike along the corridors, effacing themselves against the walls. He saw he could never get them to learn until he could get them to be; and started afternoons of drama, then music and art. Through these afternoons he brought them to life in the school, made them curious, eager to discover and understand. Perhaps this example conveys something of the deep concern for learning on the one hand, the apprehension of human happiness -- complex, compounded -- on the other.

The dominant influence in these schools, then, was someone with a strong personal stake in what he or she was doing. Perhaps the sort of people I am describing would be successful teachers no matter what method they used. But the first premise of the integrated day that set activities at set times are not the child's route to learning, the amount of freedom consequently allowed, built on the essential uniqueness of every child: this is an approach to teaching that the

leaders in the field have, in their various ways, been feeling their way towards, and that the less pioneering spirits find a sweetly reasonable implementation of their philosophy.

One last comment before we return to the classroom. On the list of topics I intended to observe and inquire about, "standard dialect" had been prominent: to what extent was it preferred, taught, how, how often? The dialect in Leicester and Leicestershire is traditionally less "acceptable" than, for example, a west country burr or even Yorkshire, certainly much less so than Scottish or Irish. So attitude here would be revealing, since it is the social class implications of dialect that cause the flutter in the educational dovecot, however reluctant we may be to talk about them in plain terms. My first visit was to a junior school (ages seven to eleven) drawing predominantly on a lower to middle range of middle class pupils. There were more h's missing than I had expected, certainly more than I thought would go unmourned. But no one seemed to be worrying and there were so many other things to notice that I lost sight of that one. In the evening I brought up the subject with a teacher of 6- to 7-year olds in what might be called a very underprivileged neighborhood. She obviously considered the dialect question of minimal importance. "Well, you're thankful to get them writing and talking at all, aren't you?" was her reaction. As I pursued the matter, she said that sometimes she would point out the most glaring discrepancies, in written work, to the brightest children. But she would rather accept "I ain't done nowt" and go on from there than hold up proceedings -- perhaps stop them dead -- insisting on "I haven't done anything." She was adamant about work habits, especially perseverance, and classroom manners; she considered teaching a social responsibility, not just a pedagogical task. But apparently dialect wasn't worrying her.

The next school on the list was large, modern, combined infants and juniors. The headmaster was said to be more conscious than most of his school's public image, to have stronger parent involvement. The houses on the way there bespoke the rising young executive. Outside the school was a strikingly attractive sculpture, children's work of high quality. I paused in the foyer to look at more beautiful art; and heard from around the corner fruity north-country tones of the kind that actors would use in drawing-room comedies that poked fun at the newly-rich, that used to get radio comedians a laugh before they'd even cracked a joke. As I looked for the headmaster's office, I found that was where they were coming from; and, of course, they were his. The dialects in the schools, from teachers and children alike, were something to savor, as distinctive and appetizing as the national cheeses.

In written work in the earlier grades dialects are reflected a little, but I didn't catch any in the later work I saw, except perhaps faintly, a local phrase here and there in the most personal writing. Apparently, acquiring the accepted written dialect is no great stumbling block. Perhaps this is because it is recognized for

what it is: a special form of the language with its own special purpose. It's when you use the written form as a basis for oral communication (as many tracts on standard dialect do) that you run counter to both the nature of the language and the nature of the child. And the trouble goes wide and deep. Not only is the written form unviable as spoken form, it also acquires so many unpleasant associations in the child's mind that he doesn't want to use it as a written form either.

The child who doesn't want to write, so far as I could gather, was nonexistent in the schools I visited. Obviously, different children preferred different kinds of writing. (I remember an eight-year-old sitting me down to read her "novel" -- her third -- and we could hardly find room among the reference books her neighbor was using to help him write an accurate report on his tortoise.) Writing is an integral part of many different activities on which they are enthusiastically engaged, so they get plenty of practice in relevant writing. The models for this writing are also at hand: stories, poetry, reference books, newspapers, travellers' tales, an abundant variety in fact of good reading. ("We had fifty-odd books in the classroom on the subject from the county library," teachers would mention in describing their middle ages project, or class opera, stamp collecting, investigation of the local church or whatever.) In addition to the freedom from threatening pressure, and the relevant practice and models, there's always a little judicious correction. This correction serves mainly to remind, perhaps clarify, at the stage when the child needs and can take it.

We might well find the classroom after coffeebreak gathering together to go to assembly. There is no one pattern for these assemblies. Some schools gather in full every morning as soon as school opens, others later; some by choice or force of numbers meet in different groups at different times; some follow the usual religious form with a hymn and a prayer, others concentrate on some expression of dignity or charity or other virtue, yet others are basically a sharing time. What they have in common is the leading part played in them by the children. The most usual arrangement is for each class in the school to have a week during which it is responsible for the entire assembly, once, twice, or perhaps even every day that week. Dramatized readings of fables and other talks are a recurrent ingredient, but there are also plays, concerts, readings of original poetry, school news reports . . . an infinite variety.

During an afternoon visit to a country junior school I heard a tape of that morning's music, the class in charge teaching an instrumental piece to the rest of the school, everybody playing some instrument or other. ("We go round the junk shops for old instruments, dig them out of attics, beg them, borrow them, put on fetes to raise money for them. We've got the parents interested now. You should hear us when we have a session with them joining in as well! We're losing our music man this year, but we know enough now to help each other along. He's a classics scholar

really, but he's always been keen on music and got us started and we've never looked back.")

At another school, during election week, I heard a class's commentary on the campaign day by day, including interviews with the main figures.

The assemblies are in many ways symptomatic of what is going on in these schools. That the whole school should meet together, that there should be some kind of participation and sharing, this is retention of a tradition in British schools. But that the children should themselves decide what they want to do, and should have so much of their own creative work to contribute, these are signs of the times. Perhaps even more indicative is the flexibility of their duration: ten minutes, thirty minutes, even more, according to what's going on. Sometimes a presentation will catch on and become a happening and even forty minutes of precious "instruction" time will be devoured.

The assemblies furnish an example also of staff relationships in the progressive school. They are, obviously, a public exposure of the sort of work a teacher is achieving with his class. Not that assemblies are the only chance teachers have of seeing how their colleagues are getting along, for these schools are very open places, with teachers and children welcomed into each other's rooms throughout the day. And when the children had gone, I noticed, teachers would invite each other into their rooms to see some good idea they'd hit on and how it was working out. But the assemblies go further than this in that they show how the good ideas are fitting together, developing, building. They call for thoroughness in presentation; the material to be shared is expected to have been explored with some depth and precision. On the whole, the assemblies I saw were offered and received with considerable satisfaction as a mutually stimulating sharing.

In the assemblies, I was struck by the opportunity afforded for development of another kind of language that the children would need in the world, different from the language going on in the classroom. Work there, as we saw, is a joint undertaking carried along by language closely related to the inner language we use to clarify thinking and to organize and pursue inquiry. In fact, I happened on nothing in a classroom that might properly be called presentation. This emphasis on language for learning -- internalized learning -- is surely proper in a school.

As we have seen, it is current work in the classroom that leads to the high standard of assembly programs; and the assemblies in turn feed back into other classrooms. But this is the mix and flow of the different springs in our lives, not indiscriminate flooding. And in this connection it is surely significant that the assemblies, in common with most of the other school activities, rise out of the child's present needs. They are not something concocted to afford training in public address or program management

or audience assessment. They do accomplish this, of course. But the child's active provision of the program (arising out of his own work and his own decisions) insures that primarily the assemblies provide a means for him to think and feel his way into the larger community, the whole school. Concomitantly, therefore, the language uses developed by these occasions also arise out of his present needs, and stand a better chance of being an extension of his unique self. When children are assembled in institutions it is easy to mislead them into the mouthed language of adult role-playing. The assemblies I saw had not fallen into this pit.

The rest of the morning in the classroom would be a continuation of what had gone before, untrammeled by a fixed timetable. Some teachers who haven't quite cast free from traditional methods will have started the day with an onslaught on the three R's, children doing assignments at the different subject tables before moving on to less structured work. Others are more prepared for a child's spending the entire morning on one activity, if it entails fruitful learning. It is rash to generalize; but I do remember various classes where the latter part of the morning seemed a popularly relaxed and happy time for various language arts pursuits. Some children, having got their chores out of the way first, are now settled down for some enjoyable reading and writing. Others would have worked on their pet project as soon as they got to school, and having devoted to that as much time as they wanted, or felt they could afford, are writing their log on it, or reading probably on related subjects. Certainly the book corner would be full.

The book corner in most classrooms is a little space squeezed out of what is already a very squeezed room. It is usually very private and gives the feeling of being tucked away, surrounded by higher than child-height book racks. One misses in English schools the American abundance of beautifully produced books. School libraries are often just a collection of books strung out along a corridor; and classrooms rarely have a large selection. But children in the book corners were eager to have a visitor look into many favorites and were obviously enjoying reading there. Side by side with established authors were the novels, reference books, collected poems, records of trips, and research chronicles produced by individuals and groups in the class. The latest school designs push the assembly hall, traditionally the hub of the school, to one side, and revolve instead around a library and quiet space. But there is still plenty to be said for that little world within a world in the classroom.

Other children will be reading basal readers. The great majority of pupils in these progressive schools will be going through some basal program or other, with their progress closely recorded. One is rather surprised, in fact, after so many articles stressing their freedom, at the great importance these schools allot to a systematic reading scheme for each child. The approach is rather different, however, from prevalent American practice. To begin with, there will be any number of programs within the same classroom.

The aim is to fit each child with the program best for him. The child is checked by his teacher as he goes through, each in his own book in his own series at his own rate; and the teacher will use his discretion as to whether he goes on to the next in the series or repeats or skips.

Many principals like to hear each child read regularly, and have a close concrete assessment of the state of reading throughout the school. Standardized reading tests are often administered only twice throughout the primary years: towards the end of the infant school and the end of the junior school. Any information of especial note will then be passed on to the next school.

Articles written by observers sometimes maintain that there are virtually no reading problems in these schools; but I found no one working there saying this, and "the remedial class" was mentioned quite frequently. I remember one school where the rooms were packed with delights -- a detailed mural of a row of shops, for example, contents inside each labeled and numbered, clocks, weights, the appropriate tools, vendors in the appropriate dress; Pascal's triangle built up with transparent colored plastic like stained glass against the window, with the explanation underneath; a numerical sequence illustrated in tie-dyed materials. I didn't want to give up time there for an inspection of the remedial reading room, but the headmaster was firm. He led me out to a dull wooden box wedged into the playground, up rather ricketty steps. Then inside it was suddenly light and airy and everywhere were visual and tactile treasures, some in piles to play with, some elegantly displayed on burlap-covered panels, and in the corner a puppet theater and a king puppet in brocade and velvet and animal puppets, and models of string games next to them with brightly colored string there to try your own hand. For one wrenching moment I thought we'd have to walk through to some little room where the serious work was done, equipped with the usual piles of textbooks and tests. But of course the next moment I saw the logic of it all and was reading the names of the shells and the string game instructions and sharpening my perceptions on the leaf display and here was the outline of a puppet play the children had been working on. "When I was first teaching," the headmaster was saying, "over thirty years ago, there was a teacher ran her mentally retarded class this way, and I remember one day seeing two of our brighter lads peering in and one saying to the other, "'Eee, don't you wish you was daft!'" There were books in the room too, I noticed. And now the headmaster pointed out the various machine aids, and phonetic games, and self-check systems.

These schools are very serious about helping every child perform to the best of his ability. But the children who can't keep up with the rest aren't branded as failures. Everyone can do something; and it is the individual accomplishments and contributions that are most visible in a classroom, not prowess or lack of it in the skills. I remember the teacher in one infant

class asking who would like to show the visitor their writing books. There was an instant forest of waving blue books and a very small boy thrust his into my hand. "Oh you must see Richard's," the teacher said. "His stories are lovely." And indeed they were. It was somewhat difficult finding the way through his spelling, but worth it. "He has trouble with his reading," the teacher said discreetly in my ear. "But you can hardly call him backward, can you, when he writes like that?"

Reading and writing are inseparably linked in these schools. Children do their own very personal writing as soon as they can get a few sounds down in i.t.a. or traditional orthography, working with their own vocabulary books which they build up as they go along, and helping each other get the spelling right. They're reading as they write, obviously, and then reading each other's with delight. And the most interesting writing is not necessarily produced by the most academically adept, as we all know.

There was a class of eight- and nine-year olds doing a puppet operetta with their Carl Orff instruments. Some of them were stumbling over the lines they had to read, but nobody minded. The lines were short and entertaining, with plenty of interchange and places for everyone to join in instead of just sitting there bored, frustrated and critical. How much easier it is to have a reading repeated without pain if all you have to say is, "Could you make it sound really fierce?" or "That's an important line. May we hear it again?" So while the many opportunities for reading aloud all provide for thorough mastery, it is the enjoyment that is paramount.

Several references have already been made to a language arts activity that is almost certain to be going on somewhere in the classroom at this time, as it's going on everywhere all the time: personal writing. This might be poetry, or stories, or a careful, factual account of a field trip, or family chat, or a memory, whatever the child feels like writing about there and then. For those whose memories or imaginations might be sluggish, there are suggestions on the board by the writing table, or on assignment cards. These might be opening sentences, or a newspaper clipping, or a pile of interesting pictures. Most children I saw weren't in need of stimulation; and those who needed it initially soon took off on their own. Children write easily and well in these schools, having had plenty of practice from the beginning, and being helped to develop their capacities where they are deeply involved. There is an unbroken progression from the pictures the child draws when he first comes into the infant school, through the pictures he has the teacher or an older friend put an explanation under, through writing his own comments, through writing as much comment as picture, through writing what he wants to say and illustrating it if he feels like it.

It will be seen that in some ways fewer demands are made of the teacher in the integrated day. Anyone who has tried to stimulate the development of genuine, lively writing in a traditional classroom knows the endless preparation that must go into it; the energy demanded in motivating the reluctant, in persuasion that forever teeters on the brink of cajoling and wheedling and threats. But the nearer the child's school activities approximate his natural way of doing, growing, learning, the more clearly we can see what sort of help he needs, and when. We know when the time is ripe for a session on mechanical skills, or when to ignore the errors and respond as a person to what he as a person has written, or when, and to what extent, to combine the two. This is by no means to say that the teacher in the integrated day is not constantly feeding in ideas. He is; ideas for writing as for everything else. But when the children have so much encouragement to be themselves, their own ideas flow in an evergrowing stream.

As soon as it was known in a classroom that the visitor was interested in their writing, it was always the same -- children all over me with their books, begging me to read this page and that, asking the teacher for books he had in his keeping so that I could read their favorite effort of a year or more ago, bringing over the large joint efforts they'd written, illustrated, and bound for various special occasions. They knew each other's work well, and would enthusiastically recommend some story its author was proffering. The teachers had an amazing memory of this vast output, and when we were looking at work without the children there they would indicate interesting points and developments, and detail how these fitted in with a particular child's abilities and personality and home background.

Any gaps in the teachers' knowledge of language does not arise out of the system of the integrated day. In fact, as I have already stressed, it is more likely that the teacher will be effective in this set-up since so much can be forwarded by a sensitive and practical personal response. But I would like to see teachers more familiar with recent research on the relationship between language and thought; and consequently more sensitive to the different characteristics of different areas of language. Much the teachers know by experience and common sense, but they could use a stronger theoretical framework, in order to be sure that all their children are exploring as many aspects of language as are presently relevant to them. To be frank, I'm not certain how much of a noticeable difference this would make in the sort of classes I have been describing; probably not much. But I think this framework is necessary if the results produced by these obviously gifted teachers are to be obtained more generally; and also if the present successes themselves are to be developed. Principals that I talked to about this were strongly in agreement. I think observers sometimes miss the importance accorded to theoretical frameworks in these schools. Theories tend not to be noticed in the classrooms since they are so fleshed out and vitalized by the children's own

interests. And sometimes the teachers and principals will be so eloquent in their criticism of a framework, or more likely, of the methods that sometimes result from some framework or other, that they give the impression that they are proceeding by pragmatic intuition. But I found them, without exception, repudiating those accounts of their schools which implied that this was in fact their *modus operandi*. Their successes are emphatically not a matter of good intentions and luck. They are based on deep, searching thought; on thorough study of research into child development; and they work hard at utilizing frameworks which are relevant to the acquisition of different knowledges and skills. Their basic belief, in fact, is in the symbiosis of human development and the totally committed pursuit of knowledge. (But of course they'd never say it so pompously!)

There seems to be some indication that a possible language framework evolved from recent research is not yet operative in the schools. But at such time as Leicestershire decides to tackle it, help will be available. There are a number of experienced advisory teachers in the county, working out of two teachers' centers (one mainly primary, one secondary), who travel around the schools giving practical help in introducing new practices, organizing courses, talking to parents, advising new teachers, and so on. The centers are attractive places, open several nights a week, with libraries, resources and machinery for the production of teaching materials, displays of educational equipment, and collections of work from different schools. Questions and suggestions are earnestly invited by their personnel, and dealt with constructively. That is, the channels of communication are really open, and there are many practical results. A current 12-page mimeographed report of activities includes, for example, a brief description of a reading study group. This has been formed in response to "requests from several schools about methods and ideas for the teaching of reading"; the group looking into such areas as finding parallel books in different reading series, and investigating diagnostic testing. Also mentioned in the pamphlet are the trial science units produced by national foundations which are being tested in local schools; an environmental studies group, whose findings are being compiled and will be available at the center; a description of materials collected by an upper school during its Spanish study, which can now be used elsewhere.

One of the most outstanding differences in the teaching of language arts in these schools, compared with most American schools is the use of drama. I find myself reluctant to go into this, and not only because we have heard so much about it. It is so frustrating that so many people in America have known, for a long time, the importance of drama in the classroom; that a few brave, energetic, and persistent people have put it firmly there and told us about it; and that nevertheless to the great majority of elementary teachers it remains some sort of exotic mystery where angels fear to tread. Drama, like writing, talking, and reading, flourishes in the atmosphere of the integrated day, and in its turn enriches it. So I saw plenty of drama, and

it was exciting and fun, and it was clearly playing an important part in the paramount task of the primary schools, that is, providing each child with the encouragement and the tools of civilization to find *himself*. There is plenty for us to learn from it, just as there has been from the American teachers using drama for the past forty years or so.

Perhaps the special message from the Leicestershire schools is that it isn't only fools who rush in, nor specialists either. In fact, here again the schools seemed blessed rather than cursed by their lack of a specialist teacher. In drama, as in art and in music, the classroom teacher was able to share with the children some of the most enjoyable and revealing experiences of the day, leading to them out of work going on in other subjects and then building on them further, later on. Some teachers make a better job of it in some ways than others. Those more sensitive to character and language, for example, will be more likely to develop interesting dialogue, while others will explore dance drama. There's room for all. Improvised drama is as natural to a child as breathing; and it stays with us in many forms throughout our lives.

I remember most clearly drama I saw in the early afternoon, I'm not sure why. Perhaps it is that as the second session of school got underway, after a long lunch break, drama seemed the natural means of going back to source, one's own source, and drawing enough from it to get to the end of the day in a relevant direction. Or perhaps it's just logistics, the hall being now free from assembly and lunch tables. Whatever, I shan't forget one rather portly gentleman cheering with such gusto from the sideline as his class played out a dramatic international soccer match that I expected him any minute to kick off his shoes and join them. Or a neat, quiet lady with her faced wreathed in smiles as her class stormed a medieval fortress awash with gore and bloodcurdling oaths. Not that I'm advocating classroom drama as teacher therapy! But I do think the success of many of these teachers stems from their being open to themselves, to the daydreams and curiosities and anxieties that they have been living with as long as they can remember. It is by this inner route that they make contact with the child.

Let's put the time loop back to the end of the morning, to the cleaning up chores, and some standing in line. I saw teachers several times fill in the odd five minutes with language skill games, possibly spelling, or similes, or guessing a described object. The teaching of skills isn't very noticeable in these schools as they are mainly brought in at the service of other work when the child is ready for them. Some teachers will have an all-class session once a day to tackle what they have noticed as a general need; other teachers will not. Certainly I never happened on one. But I did see assignment tables with, for example, phonics games that the children had to do at some time

during the day. Spelling and punctuation are certainly not the unmentionables in these schools that one might gather from some reports. But an objective time count of minutes per day spent on instructions in the mechanics would, I'm almost sure, show considerably less in England than in America. Certainly they are never seen there as other than means to an end. You learn the conventions because you want other people to understand what you have to say.

School lunch is quite a social occasion. The children sit at tables of eight or ten, that is, large enough for separate conversations, small enough for the whole table to join in if anything interesting crops up. Kitchen staff bring serving dishes to the tables at which the children are already seated, and the oldest children serve. The age range is likely to be from youngest in the school to the oldest, as children do not necessarily sit with others from the same class. In the infant schools this means that even the oldest child is only seven. But I never saw less than efficient serving, and sometimes as they portioned out the last of a good dish the unselfishness bordered on the downright gracious. On no occasion was responsibility shifted to the adult who might appear on the scene.

As for the conversation, I was put in mind of that research finding fast becoming an old saw, the one about the high positive correlation between I.Q. and families eating breakfast together. The children in these schools are not fed like battery animals. They eat lunch together like human beings, and talk accordingly. It's the way the children talk with each other that impresses; and it is pleasant indeed to be welcomed into the group. There were so many conversations to remember, about nicknames and birthdays and the funny habits of brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers, and what it's like living in America, and what you get to know from holidays abroad. Sometimes the visitor took the chance to do a little sounding out that would have been out of place in a classroom. To a rather scruffy little ten-year-old lad beside me, I said, "Is there anybody particularly smart in your class?" "oo, I'm smart, look, I came in my best jacket today!" (transatlantic misunderstanding) "I mean, is there anybody very clever in your class?" Several now joined in. "You should see Nicky G., he can do handstands *and* cartwheels!" "Yeah, but what about Pete, he can jump higher than . . . ." "I mean is anybody especially good at sums, or -- " "Well, you saw how good I was doing this morning in my sum book, and I wrote ---" Yes, I had seen the sum book, and that morning it wasn't too bad, but the rest was rather disastrous. But he spoke with an open, unbrash cheerfulness that while it wouldn't be enough to get him through university wouldn't have him giving up before time either.

This was the school where the headmaster had unstreamed his junior school before Leicestershire had managed to throw off the yoke of the eleven-plus examination. Instead of fewer passes than usual, as so many parents and colleagues had predicted,

he had in fact one or two more, and in addition he had many borderline cases who were called for interview. The interviewers told him that they had been put into a real quandary. *All* of the children that they talked with were articulate and curious and showed such signs of being able to cope with advanced studies that they couldn't think how to discriminate among them.

At another school, not the most progressive, the children took me during the lunch hour all around their animal center in the school grounds, explaining habits, feeding, breeding, past excitements and sadnesses there, expectations and their basis for them. It had been set up by the fourth-year teacher whose special competence is science, and who had told me earlier how dissatisfied he is with his shortcomings in language areas.

Third and last, I remember a nine-year-old who asked me so many questions per minute that that was one lunch that never got finished. "His reading and arithmetic aren't up to much," his teacher had said earlier, "but we wouldn't be without him." This was lunch time. For the moment I wasn't puzzling about language and growth. But I knew these were people getting a great deal out of life, and putting plenty in it for others.

The mornings are long, and lunch time quite long, so the afternoons whiz by. Each child will have several activities planned for the day that he still hasn't got around to, so he's still stepping lively. And then comes that pleasant time of clearing up after a good day's work, a feeling of accomplishment and relaxation, and the children settle around the teacher for a story. In several schools it wasn't necessarily their own teacher they settled around, as two or three classes would gather together, with one teacher in charge, releasing the others to write up their pupil records for the day while details were still fresh in their minds. The stories I heard were often old favorites or perhaps a poetry session with the children joining in. The occasion was one of simple enjoyment; but apart from that very little of a literature lesson. And any other literature, as far as I could ascertain, was largely fed into other activities, such as those concerned with other times and other places, and into the writing. Most of the material appeared to be the usual traditional corpus; and I didn't see many of the fine contemporary novels and anthologies for children, either in use or on shelves. When I asked teachers about literature in their classrooms, several spoke regretfully of their lack of knowledge and confidence. In other areas a gap in the teacher's own education was often a spur to his insuring that his children didn't miss out. Music especially was mentioned as a great pleasure that they were discovering with their pupils. But I think that with literature they were apprehensive of doing more harm than good. The children were obviously writing well and were keen to read, and there were plenty of good old stories and poems that they could pass on, so they felt no pressing need to venture into unknown territory. This gap is to some extent filled by the excellent B.B.C. radio

programs for schools, which were frequently referred to. These can easily be recorded and used as the teacher wants them. Poetry is especially well handled, inviting considerable participation by the children.

Afterschool activities were many, and impressed one with the phenomenal energy a keen teacher on either side of the Atlantic can dredge up after an exhausting day. Again a comparative minutes-per-week count of time spent on these in England and America would be interesting; my impression is that rather more is expected of the teacher in England. One heard of camps and cycling clubs and farflung expeditions, all without pay.

So much for a day in the Leicestershire primary school. I hope anyone who has bothered to read thus far will have come to terms with the relentless enthusiasm. The truth is that after years of suspecting that a dislike of schools signified some deep personal inadequacy, these schools struck such a happy note of inner recognition that I felt the inadequacy might just lie in the schools I had known. It was a liberating experience, in which I was too busy enjoying the good things to have much of an eye for the bad. So let me stress once more that I have described what I consider the most constructive practices in what is undoubtedly an untypically fine group of schools. (I also saw some pretty grim schools over there, but mercifully there is no reason for reporting those.) All in all, then, there's a great deal to be learned from the progressive schools in England. But let's not go overboard, at least not without being prepared for a tough swim. As I have tried to point out, there are various differences between these schools and ours that depend on more than different educational philosophies. English custom means that things usually advance little by little over a broad front, slowly but surely. So when skeptics say that the progressive English education being made such a fuss of is only American progressive education turning up forty years late, they're not entirely wide of the mark! But the forty years haven't been wasted, and neither has the American experience, what went right and what went wrong. Essentially, the English innovations are built on what is best of established tradition, on an expansion of good things that have always been a shining thread there (faith in the arts, for example, and the love of drama), and on a long history of sound pioneer efforts, together with thorough investigation of confirmed modern research. Head teachers, the dominant influence in the schools, have many of them been evolving this approach for the past quarter of a century. They have been feeling their way in tentatively, broadening small experiments little by little, and have never expected to accomplish miracles overnight. The schools see themselves still with lots to learn, in many areas only at the beginning. And they vary greatly within themselves. Observers tend to see the same sort of class in each school; they ask to see the integrated day in action and headmasters are happy to show their most striking examples. But even in the most progressive schools there is room for the more traditional teachers also, who are referred to with respect. There is no blueprint, no magic formula.

And even if there were, would we really want it? We have to decide what is best for schools here, what stands the best chance of constructive survival within this country's culture, building on what is most valuable in this country's tradition. English educators are quick to admit that they have learned much from America, and will be happy to learn whatever else might prove of use to them. But they would never think of ditching what they have and co-opting whole chunks from outside. Of course, some would retort that the sooner American education is ditched the better. And I would agree that a great deal of it is appalling and something must be done about it fast. But we have to consider this country's educational ills deeply, from the inside, and work at putting them right from there. Surely, there's a great deal to be learned from Britain, but a hasty transplant from an entirely different climate only dies. And on that note, let's leave a Britisher the last word.

" ' Brains first and then Hard Work. Look at it! *That's* the way to build a house,' said Eeyore proudly."

PART TWO

RESEARCH

LEARNING SIGHT WORDS[1]

by Robert Christina

This study tested the ease or difficulty of learning eight words presented by a look-say technique and by look-say augmented by tracing, when the eight words were printed in the Initial Teaching Alphabet and when they were printed in traditional orthography. The subjects for the experiment were 120 kindergarten children in the East Syracuse-Minoa Public Schools in the early spring of 1970. Kindergarten children were chosen because they had had no formal instruction in reading other than having been taught the names of the letters.

All the kindergarten children in two schools in the district participated. They were randomly assigned to four treatment groups. No selection criteria were used.

Purposes of the Study

The study was designed to investigate the following questions:

1. Does use of i/t/a make a difference in the initial learning of eight sight words and in their retention after 24 hours and again after a week has elapsed?

2. Does tracing words, whether they are printed in i/t/a or traditional orthography, increase children's efficiency in learning to read these words or in remembering them?

3. How do these eight words rank according to ease of learning under the four modes of presentation?

4. What are the characteristics of words which are easily learned and which are frequently confused?

Procedures

Five experienced master's candidates in the EPDA program served as teachers for the experiment. They taught each child individually,

[1]Robert Christina, Orthography, Presentation Techniques and Sight Word Acquisition of Beginning Readers, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1970.

presenting eight words according to procedures outlined by the investigator. All of the 120 children learned the eight words to criterion, most of them completing the task in about twenty minutes.

The children were assigned to four treatment groups of 30 children each. One treatment group (LS-TO) used a look-and-say presentation technique which required the children to look at and say each word, repeating the word twice after the examiner. The words taught to this group were printed in traditional orthography. Another group (LS-ITA) used the same look-and-say presentation technique, but the words taught to this group were printed in the Initial Teaching Alphabet. A third group (T-TO) repeated the word once after the teacher and traced it. For this group the eight words were printed in traditional orthography. The fourth group (T-ITA) followed the same procedure, but the eight words were printed in i/t/a.

First, eight word cards were placed before the child, and he was told, "Today we are going to learn to read these words. It's easy to read. You read words. Words tell you what to say. Each word tells you to say something different. You have to learn what each word tells you to say, and then you'll know how to read them. Today you're going to learn what these eight words tell you to say. Each time you get a word right, you put it here (an area near the child was specified), and when you have all eight words here, you'll win a toy."

Next, the examiner shuffled the eight word cards, drew one, and placed it before the child. The examiner pronounced the word and used it in a sentence. Then the child repeated the word correctly twice. This same procedure was followed for each of the eight words.

too	tꝏ
king	kiŋ
cow	cou
how	hou
make	mæk
made	mæd
wish	wiʃh
which	whiʧh

After this brief instruction, the eight words were shuffled again and presented one word at a time to the child. If he read the word correctly, he was praised and the word was placed in the "correct" area. If children in the LS-ITA and LS-TO treatment groups did not read the word correctly, they were simply told the word and required to repeat it. In T-ITA and T-TO treatment groups, the children traced the word. The procedures were repeated until each child responded correctly four times for each word. He was then rewarded with a small plastic toy. A record was kept of the number of trials on each word before the criterion of four correct responses was reached.

Approximately 24 hours later and again one week later, each child was tested on the eight words. A record was kept of which words were remembered.

Results

The experimental design and statistical treatment made it possible to decide whether there were significant differences between the two types of orthography, between the two presentation techniques, or interactions between the two variables of orthography and presentation technique.

Does use of the i/t/a in contrast to traditional orthography make a difference in learning or retaining words? No significant differences between i/t/a and t/o were found; so judgment on this question has to be suspended. Other words using additional i/t/a symbols might have produced different effects, but the eight words used in this study yielded no evidence either to contradict or to support Downing's statement:

> "The medium used in beginners' books seems to be a vital factor in learning to read. Since most reading research has failed to control this factor of the printed medium, many generalized judgments on problems of reading instruction may need to be substantially modified." (p. 45, Downing, 1964)

Does tracing each word help beginning readers to learn or retain words presented by a look-say technique? The evidence related to this question is more conclusive. There were significant differences between the groups that traced words and the groups that employed only look-and-say techniques, indicating that tracing enabled children to achieve four correct responses sooner. Two possible explanations for the significant differences have been suggested in the literature. King and Muehl (1965) maintained that because beginning readers view all words as very similar they benefit from the additional sensory cues provided by tracing. Gates (1935) asserted that tracing controls left-to-right movement and is an attention-focusing device.

However, there were no indications that initial learning of

words printed either in i/t/a or t/o or learned with or without the reinforcement of tracing affected retention twenty-four hours or one week later. (Retention in this study was found to be less than 50 percent.) There were also no indications that interaction of orthography and presentation technique affected the rate at which these children learned or retained words.

These results indicate some guidelines for classroom practice. When beginning readers have difficulty in paying attention to a word or when they fail to utilize a left-to-right approach, the tracing technique should be beneficial. This technique appears to make initial learning more efficient but is no aid to retention. The fact that no review was provided between the initial teaching and the follow-up testing accounts for the low retention exhibited by all four groups.

Significant differences were also found when confusion errors were examined. (A confusion error was defined as the substitution of another word on the list for the word being tested.) These results indicated that the degree of similarity may affect the ease with which children learn words. Words which began and ended with the same letters (i.e., wish and which) were more frequently confused than words with similar endings only (i.e., cow and how) or completely dissimilar words (i.e., too and king).

Classroom teachers selecting words for individual or group activities should consider the possible confusions which may arise because of similarities between words. Many words having similar beginnings in a list or in context may be a source of difficulty for beginning readers. However, although there is evidence in this study that similar words are initially harder to learn than dissimilar words, other studies have shown a beneficial effect from using similar words for learning activities. Studies by Samuels and Jeffrey (1966) and McCutcheon and McDowell (1969) indicate that learning similar words is initially more difficult, but later learning may be easier. Both studies found that learning dissimilar words resulted in rapid initial learning, but later learning of related words was faster when initial instruction was on similar words. That is, the ease of initial learning may be offset by later difficulty with related words.

Other results which may be of interest were those concerned with the retention of various words. If every child had remembered a word on both retention measures, the score for that word would have been 240. The word too had a score of 214; the word made had a score of 40. All words used in the study maintained very similar rank orders of retention, regardless of the treatment. The word too was relatively easy for all groups just as the word made was difficult for all groups.

This tendency of the words to keep the same order was also noted with respect to the rate at which words were learned. There was considerable agreement among the four groups as to easy and difficult words for initial learning. Coleman (1969, 1970a) found similar results and also found no significant effects on ease or difficulty from the frequency with which a word appeared.

Coleman (1970b) suggests that classroom teachers might select words for initial reading instruction on criteria other than the frequency with which the words are used. The criterion he suggests is learnability. He believes it is useful to select and order words according to difficulty by teaching them to children who have not been exposed to previous reading instruction.

In a series of such studies, Coleman (1969) tried many words and obtained a list of 160 which he ranked according to learnability. The East Syracuse-Minoa study, which used some words from the Coleman list, corroborated his findings with respect to the ease or difficulty of learning these words. Classroom teachers may find lists of rank-ordered words useful as a source of words for beginning reading. Such lists also provide a clue to the readability of beginning reading materials.

Of course, the results of this study of learnability of words, the effects of i/t/a and t/o, the value of tracing, and frequency and types of confusion errors, must be interpreted cautiously. The conclusions drawn from this study are probably valid for the children who participated. They may also be valid for children similar to those of the present study, but they are entirely tentative for any other children.

This study reemphasized the individual nature of children's learning. Some children who did not use tracing learned words faster and retained more of them than children who did. Some children remembered only the word made, a few children did not remember the word too. Words which confused some children did not confuse others.

The point should be emphasized that this study did not investigate whether kindergarten children can or should be taught to read. The children were selected because they had not been exposed to formal reading instruction. In this experiment, they were taught individually, and the methods and purposes were more appropriate to laboratory research than to the classroom. The focus of the study was the "learnability" of eight words under two conditions of presentation and two types of orthography, not on the learning ability of the 120 children who participated in the study.

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REPLICATION STUDY:

WORD BOUNDARIES

by Robert Christina

In a descriptive study of 39 first graders, Meltzer and Herse[1] after two and one half months of school indicated the extent and types of confusions about word boundaries exhibited by these children. Each child completed nine short tasks and the data were used to answer three questions regarding: (1) how children defined word boundaries; (2) whether they could differentiate between numbers, letters and words; (3) the relationship of the whole-made-up-of-parts concept to word boundary knowledge. The 39 first graders in this study had been introduced to reading through the Scott Foresman *New Basic Readers*, and the best readers were completing their third pre-primer.

The present study was a replication of the Meltzer and Herse study with a different group of first graders, a different basal series (Houghton Mifflin) and a different time of year. Children were all of the first graders from the Heman Street School and testing was completed during the last month of school.

Method

Each child was asked individually to complete nine tasks. The materials used and abbreviated directions are given below:

1. Sentence (Seven cowboys in a wagon saw numerous birds downtown today) was printed on paper 17 inches long and 3 inches wide. Letters were 3/8" with ascenders 5/8" in height and there was a space and a half between letters and words as compared to spacing of standard print. (Child was asked to count each word as he pointed to it. Then he circled each word.)

2. On a 3 x 5 card in same size print, each of the following (2, 5, 8, e, t, s, labor, for, boy) was printed. (Cards were spread before child and he was asked to pick up the cards with numbers on them.)

3. On a 3 x 5 card each of the following was printed (324, 5927, 24159, m, a, h, foot, rest, plans). (Child was asked to pick up cards with words on them.)

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[1]Nancy S. Meltzer and Robert Herse, "The Boundaries of Written Words as Seen by First Graders," *Journal of Reading Behavior*, *I*, No. 3 (1969), pp. 3-14.

4. Five pennies in true size were xeroxed on a 5" x 7" card. (Child was asked how many pennies were on card.)

5. Pictures of four pennies cut in half with a small space between were on a 5" x 7" card. ("How many whole pennies are on this card?")

6. Pictures of two pennies cut in half and correctly oriented but 2 inches apart were on a 5" x 7" card. (Same question as 5.)

7. Pictures of five pennies, four of which were cut in half and variously spaced but in correct orientation, were on a 5" x 7" card. (Same question as 5 and 6.)

8. One whole paper cup and two paper cups cut in half lengthwise. (Child was shown whole paper cup. When two cut cups were placed on table, he was asked how many.)

9. Sentence (I want to see someone do something on a house-boat) was printed on paper 17 inches long and one inch wide with tallest letters 7/8" high and other 1/4" with a space and a half between letters and words. (Child counted words, then cut a word at a time and gave it to examiner.)

Defining Word Boundaries

In the original study errors in the discrimination of word boundaries were classified in five categories as follows:

1. Divided at a tall letter; e.g., downt/own/
2. Divided elsewhere than at tall letter; e.g., num/erous/
3. Combined two words; e.g., /in a/
4. Combined letters with no regard to space; e.g., se/ven/ co/wboy/s s/aw/
5. Equated words and letters; e.g., s/e/v/e/n/

Various combinations of errors in discriminating word boundaries were provided as evidence that there is a sequence in the development of the concept of word boundaries, from the equation of words and letters through to the understanding that space is the determinant. The sequence is as follows:

a. Letters are words.

b. A word is a unit made up of more than one letter.

c. Space is used as a boundary unless the words are short, in which case they are combined; or long, in which case they are divided.

d. Only long words continue to be divided.

e. Spaces indicate word boundaries except where there is a "tall letter in the middle of a word (p. 13)

The present study noted similar patterns of errors which supported the sequence proposed by Meltzer and Herse. However, some discrepancies were also noted. Analyses of error categories revealed that while dividing long words at tall letters was still an error, the nature of the error could be clarified by a reclassification. In all instances (9) where the error was made the word was a compound word and the division was made between the two words that composed the compound word; e.g., down/town. In the second category -- dividing elsewhere than at a tall letter -- 10 of the 11 children who made errors in this category made a similar error, e.g., downto/wn or down/to/wn. Consequently, a different classification scheme for the error is proposed here.

1. Division at small words; i.e., separating small words as in donwto/wn or down/to/wn.

2. Correct division of two parts of compound words.

3. Division elsewhere than at small words.

When the errors are reclassified to include these two types of errors, the following frequencies occur:

a) Divided at a tall letter	0	e) Equated words and letters	5
b) Divided elsewhere than at small words	4	f) Divided at "small" words	10
c) Combined two words	17	g) Correctly divided parts of compound words	9
d) Combined letters with no regard to space	8	h) No errors	32

The incidence of errors by reading groups is also presented:

Errors in Definition of Word Boundaries
by Reading Group (in per cent)

Reading Group	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	Total Errors (N)
2^1 N=15			100%					1
1^2 N=31		4%	33%			30%	33%	24
1^1 N=12			50%			38%	12%	8
$2nd^{PP}$ N=3			25%	25%	50%			4
$1st^{PP}$ N=8		19%	19%	43%	19%			16

The error of combining two words results in the largest precentage of errors at the three highest reading groups, which contrasts with the Meltzer and Herse's finding that most errors were on division at tall letters. However, the original study grouped categories a, f, and g under the label of divided at tall letter. Combining the precentages of these three categories supports the findings of the original study; but it is suggested that Meltzer and Herse's results occurred because there was more possibility of making an error that could be classified as division at tall letters.

Differentiating between Numbers, Letters, and Words

A total of 24 of the 67 children made errors on tasks 2 and 3 which were used to determine if children could differentiate between numbers, letters, and words. The majority of these errors (16) occurred because the child selected all letters and words when asked to select only words. It would appear that many children cannot clearly differentiate between letters and words, but there was only one instance where a child selected a number for a word and another interesting instance where a child selected *for* when asked to select all numbers.

A summary of the letter and word errors by reading group follows:

Errors in Letter-Word Confusion by Reading Group
(in per cent)

Reading Group	Errors
2^1 N=13	13%
1^2 N=31	6%
1^1 N=12	33%
$2nd^{PP}$ N=3	66%
$1st^{PP}$ N=8	75%

There are indications that per cent of error decreases as the level of reading group increases. A possible explanation for failure of this trend in the upper two groups is that assignment to reading group is based on teacher judgment, and the three teachers involved in this study did not establish common criteria for assignment to reading groups. Therefore, it is possible for some 1^2 readers to be better than 2^1 readers.

The Conceptualization of Wholes

There were 69 children who completed the tasks and 49 of these children made at least one error. The total number of errors was 117 on the five items that were used to determine the child's conceptualization of whole. The following indicates the percentage of errors on each of the

five items.

Errors in Conceptualization of Whole by Item
(in per cent)

Item	Per Cent
4	0%
5	15%
6	26%
7	32%
8	27%

When items were presented in wholes, there was no difficulty in counting them. When items were separated by more space and orientation became more diverse, frequency of errors increased. There is a similarity between separated but correctly oriented pennies and two cups sliced in half. There is considerable evidence that children at this age level have difficulty with the conceptualization of whole when space and orientation are considered.

Conclusions

Although there were some differences in the findings of this replication study, the views of Meltzer and Herse regarding the large incidence of inability to use space to separate written words is confirmed. Their suggestion that textbook writers and teachers may be assuming knowledge that the child does not have is also confirmed. However, this investigation questions their contention that "The incorrect cues to word boundaries used by these children can be considered a logical result of the reading materials to which they were exposed and to their progress in these materials." (p. 13)

Differences in the sequence and types of errors found in the original study and this replication may possibly be due to the different reading series used. It is more likely, however, that differences are a result of the reading maturity attained by children in the middle of the eighth month of reading instruction as compared with the middle of the third month.

Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence from the present study that teachers cannot assume that all children recognize words as words even at the end of first grade.

"ACTION RESEARCH" ON SPELLING

METHODS IN GRADE TWO

by Neill Mullen

Introduction

During one of the first planning meetings I had with second grade teachers after school was underway in September, I made the suggestion, "Let's list some of the problem areas as you see them now." After a brief hesitation, one teacher volunteered "spelling". The others joined in immediate and unanimous agreement and offered one comment after another on the sorry state of spelling. Since the group showed obvious concern, I did not interrupt to have them identify additional problem areas. I listened.

"How can we be expected to teach spelling when we haven't enough books to go around?"

"Have you looked at the spelling books? The kids can't even write in them!"

"Mrs. Y. writes five words on the board for her kids to copy and learn."

"Maybe we can *ditto* the spelling lessons."

"Have you seen those Books? That'd take too long."

Interjection: "How many words do you think second graders should learn in a week?"

"Mrs. Y. gives 'em five."

"But I have some that can't even read."

"That's nothing. I have one that doesn't even know all his letters!"

"I bet that Betsy in my room can spell all the words in her reader."

Interjection: "Is there some way we can determine who knows what?"

"I can tell you one thing. My low kids can't spell 'up' from 'down'".

Interjection: "Could we make up a test?"

"Sure, but where do we start?"

"We could take words they were supposed to have last year and test them."

"They weren't supposed to have spelling last year, I thought."

"I mean words from their reading books."

"I have to go. Can we continue this next time?"

"Ok."

"Me, too."

"Ok."

During the interim I thumbed through the district's reading guide for a list of basal words and ran across a spelling survey test which was included as part of a suggested informal reading inventory. The survey consisted of twenty words in each of several levels but no reference was given as to its origin. I presented it at the next gathering and offered to administer and correct it to see if we could identify different levels of achievement. Mrs. K. volunteered her class.

Level I was administered to all children and corrected. The classroom teacher and I decided that Level II should be given to each child scoring seventy-five percent or better. This was accomplished on the following day.

In the meantime, before the next grade-level meeting, I reviewed several references on spelling. The message received was twofold:

1. Teach children a process for learning new words.

2. Present the most frequently used words first.

At the next meeting only two of the four teachers were present but we were joined by an inexperienced teacher fellow. Since the idea of "process for learning new words" seemed new to them, I explained one process in wide use:

1. Look at the word.

2. Close eyes and "see" the word.

3. Look at the word.

4. Cover the word and attempt to write the word.

5. Check. Repeat if necessary.

We also spent time discussing possible sources of words, but most of the teachers' concern was with the mechanics of grouping the children. The two university fellows agreed to take the "lowest" and "highest" groups while the teachers would focus on the "middle" group.

I was disturbed by these developments for three reasons:

1. I felt that the individual needs of second graders could be met best within each classroom. Instead, the teachers chose to exchange groups among classes. I consented to this arrangement because it committed each teacher to a program and it gave recognition to individual differences.

2. Could the two university fellows develop a technique, sell it to the participating teachers, and phase out naturally in four weeks? I did not want fellows committed to long-term routine teaching.

3. Would the technique not place an additional time-burden on the teachers when the fellows phased out?

In my continuing search of the literature, I found an article by Edna Furness[1] to share with the teachers. It embodied many of the principles we had been discussing. I reproduced a copy for each teacher and asked them to look for implications it might have for second grade spelling. We were to discuss it at our next meeting.

I had also learned of successful experiences with a modified version of the Michigan Spelling Program in a nearby inner-city school. The modified program was compatible with the central issues discussed in the Furness article; so I shared the success story with the second grade teachers at the next meeting. Mild interest in the modified program was shown by three teachers, while the fourth was willing to go along with any decision made by the other three. (It might be noted here that two teachers were in their first year of teaching and one in her last year before retirement. The fourth teacher, in her third year of teaching, was secure with her class and possessed sufficient experience with conventional spelling programs to feel confident to try a new approach.)

At this point it was my understanding that each of the classes would be participating in a modified Michigan Program with each teacher and the two project fellows assuming equal responsibility for preparing worksheets. But within a week three teachers had withdrawn from the project. I did not inquire into the reasons, but I assumed a number of factors resulted in too little time for preparation of the worksheets. Perhaps a sense of ethics kept the three teachers from using the worksheets prepared by the others. Whatever the reason, the Michigan Program was implemented by only one teacher. The other classes served as controls in the "action research" which followed.

The purpose of the research was to investigate the effectiveness of an experimental spelling program introduced into one of the four second grade classrooms. The spelling program of each second grade class

[1] Edna Lue Furness, "Pupils, Teachers, and Sensory Approaches to Spelling," *Education* (Feb. Mar.) 1968, pages 267-273

will be described briefly and the relative effectiveness of the experimental program will be determined by making the following comparisons:

1. Spelling growth as determined by pre and post measures from the Stanford Achievement Test, Primary Battery.

2. Accuracy on a 40-word review test.

3. Estimate of number of words learned.

4. Index of spelling power.

Description of Programs

Group 1 (Experimental). The experimental program was an adaptation of the Michigan Spelling Program, which emphasizes the visual-kinesthetic modes and minimizes the auditory mode during the formal study of spelling words. A worksheet containing eight specific activities is designed for each spelling word. These are:

1. A simple sentence containing a deleted word within a strong context is provided. The child is required to select from two given words the one which makes the best sense. One of the choices is a target word but is not necessarily the best word to insert in the blank.

2. The target word is presented. The child looks at the word, then closes his eyes trying to visualize it. He checks his mental image with the printed form. He repeats the process, if necessary.

3. The child locates and circles five repetitions of the target word appearing in a group of 15-20 words arranged in three or four columns. The foils include words having beginnings, endings, or other features similar to the target word. This exercise requires children to exercise gross word discrimination.

4. The target word is reproduced a number of times in one row across the page. In each reproduction, one letter is omitted; a single space indicates the position of the omission. The letters are omitted in sequence. The pupil writes the appropriate letter in each blank.

5. Within a row of scrambled letters are imbedded, from left to right, the letters (in sequence) of the target word. The pupil begins with the first letter on the left and moves toward the right, circling only those letters comprising the spelling word.

6. The pupil is required to locate five repetitions of the target word among foils which closely resemble the target word. In many instances nonsense words are included to require children to exercise fine discrimination.

7. A blank space is provided for each letter in the word. The child writes the word.

I have (seven, over) apples

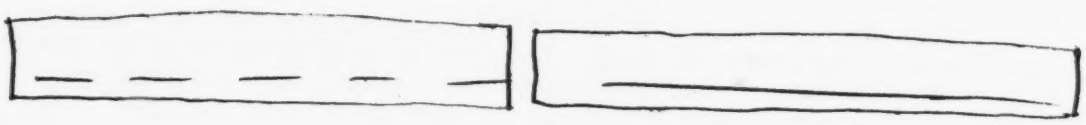
seven 57

even	seven	sever
oven	eleven	severe
seven	haven	seven
saver	sever	seven
save	seven	softer

-even s-ven se-en sev-n
seve-

j c s a u e v c t l f e m u n

sever	oven	leven
seven	seven	seren
sevan	seven	seven
saver	sevem	sever
saven	seuen	seven



8. The child writes the word from memory, without any cues..

These worksheets are stapled into study packets of three to four words and each packet is numbered sequentially. Upon completion of a packet, the child tests his mastery of the words by using the Language Master. From a large wall chart the child withdraws prepared Language Master cards from the pocket corresponding to the number of his packet. On each card a single spelling word has been recorded and used in a sentence. Each card is void of print except for the number of the pocket from which it came. The child inserts one card, listens for the word to be pronounced singly and in context, and writes the word in his spelling folder. He may reinsert the card for additional repetitions, if necessary. When he has written each word to his satisfaction, he compares his words with a key list. If his words are spelled correctly, he progresses to the next packet. If he finds an error, the child takes whatever remedial action he thinks is most effective. He may choose to write the word several times; use it in a written sentence; or look at the word, turn away and form mental image of the word, check his image and write the word. He then retakes the packet test, spelling each word correctly to earn to right to move on.

A general review test is scheduled at the completion of every fifth packet. The review test is completed in the same manner as the packet tests and contains all the words in the five previous packets. The teacher corrects each general review test.

Emphasis on accuracy is the hallmark of this approach. The child must score 100% on each test before being allowed to progress to the next packet. Thus, a child sees a direct relationship between his efforts and advancement. This practice may be contrasted to conventional spelling programs that present a new list of words each Monday irrespective of Friday's final results.

This program may be contrasted to conventional spelling programs in other ways. Perhaps the most significant contrast is self-pacing. Each child is on his own and may go as fast as his learning permits him. The slow child is never behind and the fast child does not learn to waste time by waiting for the next assignment. The teacher is never in a quandary as to what she should do--call a halt, prod the slow ones, or give a little more time. Self-pacing also does away with the need for grouping, which some teachers feel is necessary for meeting individual needs. Grouping clearly labels children as "poor" or "good" spellers. Grouping requires that the teacher decide who gets the "hardest" words, the bonus words, or the most words.

Because of the self-pacing feature, a child never gets behind due to absence. He never has a make-up test. He never is singled out on Friday or a review test time for not being ready to proceed with the class.

This approach does not burden children with the boring practice of writing each word several times. Nor does he have to write a "creative" sentence for the sake of spelling practice. However, some children in the experiment elected these practices for particularly troublesome words.

The self-pacing feature also eliminates the need for a prescribed spelling period in each day's schedule. Instead of one short spelling period three to five times weekly, the child spreads his time throughout the school day.

Another contrast appears in children's attitude toward spelling. It becomes more of a game than work since it is not teacher-assigned nor associated with copying. The children voluntarily turn to spelling in free time to perpetuate a friendly rivalry with a classmate. In fact, healthy rivalries exist at all levels--some pronounced, some unannounced.

We worried about the effect that self-pacing might have on the attitude of the slower children as the year progressed and the distance between them and the others increased. This seems to have been a needless worry. While the front runners were known to everyone, they apparently did not function as pace setters for children at other competency levels. Not once did we hear a child report his progress in terms of another child; it was always reported in relation to his achievement--"I'm on packet 19 already." Surprisingly, pupils on the lower levels were the ones to keep me informed of their progress when I visited the class or met individuals in the hall and lunch room.

On the debit side, the writing of the worksheets proved to be a very time-consuming task--one that a busy classroom teacher would not want to take on alone. In this study the classroom teacher was aided by EPDA personnel; but a group of three or four teachers whose children had common needs could divide the task. For this second grade class a total of 245 worksheets were constructed. However, next year, the ditto masters can be reused.

One of the decisions to be faced in constructing a spelling program is deciding what words to include. Two criteria were established for selecting words for this study: (1) words of high frequency required by second graders for written communication; (2) words likely to be encountered in their reading. The 220 Dolch words were selected for this project; 25 high frequency words were added in the spring when it appeared that the faster pupils would require additional worksheets before the end of the year. All words were assigned randomly to study packets.

Group 2 Spelling Program. Eight spelling words (increasing to ten later in the year) and a sentence incorporating each word were written on the chalkboard when the children arrived Monday morning. Each child was expected to copy the words and sentences in his spelling notebook and underline the spelling word in each sentence. The teacher pronounced the words and read the sentences with the children. The children repeated the word after the teacher, spelled the word in unison, and repeated the word following a say-spell-say pattern. Each child wrote every word eight to ten times for practice.

The spelling words and sentences remained on the chalkboard through Wednesday. On Tuesday, and at other times throughout the week, oral spelling was practiced by groups of children designated by the teacher.

For instance, all girls might be asked to stand with their backs to the board and spell the words in unison. Variations in the grouping included all boys, all seven-year-olds, all eight-year-olds, the first row, all April birthdays, etc. Sometimes children were asked to "write" the word on their hand with a finger.

The trial test was given on Wednesday with the teacher pronouncing the word and using each in a sentence. The papers were immediately corrected by the teacher for the children to take home. Parents were reported to be good at helping their children with difficult words.

The final test was given on Friday and immediately corrected by the teacher. All papers received the sticker of the month awarded by the teacher; perfect papers were posted on the bulletin board where they remained for the duration of the current spelling unit which lasted for two months. Each unit incorporated one "easy lesson" to permit each child to have at least one perfect paper posted. The teacher kept the other papers in pupils' folders.

The words for Group 2 were from the spelling text furnished by the school district for grade two. The weekly spelling list presented words with similar phonetic patterns starting with the short vowels, proceeding to long vowels, terminal silent *e*, terminal *y*, *ing*, vowel diagraphs, diphthongs, and vowels followed by *r*.

Group 3 Spelling Program. The eight spelling words presented each Monday at the beginning of the year were increased to ten and later fifteen words as the year progressed. In addition, certain pupils were expected to learn five bonus words each week during the latter part of the year. The weekly words were presented on dittoed lists in duplicate--one list for classroom and one for home study.

On Monday, the teacher talked about the new words, pointed out selected characteristics, used them in sentences, and emphasized their meanings. On Tuesday and Thursday the children wrote the spelling words in original sentences.

The Wednesday pretest scheduled during the earlier part of the year gave way to writing the words five times each in alphabetical order.

The final test was given on Friday, corrected by the teacher, and scores recorded in the teacher's grade book. Lollipops were awarded to those having perfect papers.

The teacher organized the class into spelling teams during the last five weeks with a promise of a party for the winning team. Each child contributed his spelling score to a team total which was averaged and recorded on a wall chart. Student enthusiasm and motivation were markedly increased.

The word pool consisted largely of words drawn from the Dolch list with additional high frequency words added by the teacher.

Group 4 Spelling Program. Six spelling words, increasing in stages to nine words, were presented to the class each Monday on the chalkboard. During the study period the children copied the sentences containing the words and wrote each spelling word three times.

On Tuesday, the teacher provided a new sentence for each word but substituted the beginning letter and a blank space for the spelling word. Each spelling word was listed on an adjacent chalkboard panel. The children selected the correct word and copied the sentence. A similar activity was provided for Wednesday but the beginning letter was omitted from the blank space. In addition, each word was written three times. As the year progressed the children were led to write original sentences.

A pretest was administered on Thursday, corrected by the teacher and returned. The final test was given each Friday following a word-sentence-word pattern of presentation. The teacher corrected the tests and recorded the scores. Perfect papers were awarded a star. Children making errors were consulted individually. The teacher provided the correct spelling for each misspelled word, provided appropriate guidance, and left the child to apply remediation best suited to his needs.

A twenty-word review test was given every five weeks without the children knowing in advance which twenty words would be selected. In early April the teacher provided each child with a dittoed list of every word studied during the year for a general review.

The eleven best spellers were expected to master an additional list of eleven bonus words each week. These words were suggested by the children and came from various sources.

Description of Second Grade Population

Intelligence: Enrollment in each group, that is, class, averaged22 or 23 throughout the year, but some turnover was experienced in three of the four classes. For the purposes of this study only those pupils who received spelling instruction from the same teacher throughout the year have been included. This accounts for the smaller class sizes reported in Table 1.

The Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test was administered in January to all second graders. These results, reported in Table 1, reveal that the groups are comparable in intelligence. A difference of less than three points is indicated between the lowest and highest group means.

TABLE 1

Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test (January, 1970)

	Group 1 (N = 18)	Group 2 (N = 17)	Group 3 (N = 17)	Group 4 (N = 22)
Q_3	109	113	105	110
Q_2	96	98	103	98
Q_1	91	91	91	91
Mean	98.9	100.8	99.9	101.3
St. Dev.	13.6	12.8	9.8	13.9

TABLE 2

Mean Grade Scores on

Stanford Achievement Test, Primary I Battery, (October, 1969)

	N	Mean Grade Score	Months Below Norm
Group 1	18	1.51	.69
Group 2	17	1.64	.56
Group 3	17	1.84	.36
Group 4	22	1.62	.58
Total	74	1.65	.55

Differences on spelling achievement scores among groups with similar I.Q. scores are not surprising. Furness (1956) found correlations between reading and spelling of .80 to .85, in contrast to correlations from .30 to .40 for spelling and intelligence.

End-of-Year Results

The Stanford Achievement Tests, Primary Battery II, were administered in May by the classroom teachers as part of the annual district-wide testing program. Comparisons between fall and spring scores in spelling are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Comparison of Mean Grade Scores in Spelling on

Stanford Achievement Tests, Primary Batteries I and II, October and May

	N	Mean Score October	Mean Score May	Gains
Group 1	18	1.51	3.22	1.71
Group 2	17	1.64	2.47	.83
Group 3	17	1.84	2.58	.74
Group 4	22	1.62	2.37	.75
Total	74	1.65	2.65	1.0

The unusual growth achieved by Group 1, which used the modified Michigan Spelling Program, raises a number of questions. The first question that may well be asked is whether the accelerated growth of Group 1 is a quirk of testing, or is indeed real. It seems unlikely that statistical regression is operating in this case. Campbell and Stanley (1969) say that this variable is at its minimum operable level within top and bottom groups that have been formed on the basis of pretest scores when growth is to be determined by a post test. Group 1, which supposedly contained the poorest readers, also had the lowest mean spelling score in October. Group 3, with the highest readers, had the highest mean spelling score in October. Admittedly, these pretest scores were not the basis for forming the groups; teachers' estimates of reading ability served that purpose. But the effects are the same. These gains on the standardized test are substantiated by Group 1's scores on teacher-made tests, to be reported later.

It is surprising that the lowest readers made the greatest gains in spelling, but it is not inexplicable. The modified Michigan Spelling Program used by Group 1 places almost no emphasis on auditory discrimination, in accordance with research in spelling which has shown that visual discrimination and visual memory have the highest correlation with accuracy in spelling. (Horn, 1969) Children who have had poor success with a reading program that emphasizes auditory discrimination, such as the Houghton Mifflin series used in first and second grades, may yet achieve success with a spelling program strongly oriented to visual perception.

The self-pacing feature of the experimental program is especially beneficial to pupils at either extreme of the achievement continuum. Even slower learning children could see a positive relationship between effort and progress. Moreover, the short list of words in each packet produced short-term goals and resulted in a review test every two to four days. Moreover, the self-pacing feature made it impossible for children in the experimental group to experience failure. Even though they had to achieve one hundred per cent accuracy on one packet before proceeding to another, no one was expected to be at a certain point by a certain time. Thus no one was ever behind. There were no top and bottom groups. There were no charts to reveal to others the number of words mastered by individuals. Of course, children seemed to sense their relative class standing and to choose their own rivals. But any competition that resulted was child-directed, not teacher-directed, a difference of great importance.

Number of Words Studied by Four Classes

Because of the different approaches taken in each class, the number of words studied varied. In Group 1, two thirds of the pupils studied 185 words or more. Since the slowest pupil studied as few as 91 words in this self-pacing approach, and the four fastest children reached 209, the mean number studied was 173; the median, 185. Group 2 studied 212 words and made a mean gain of 8 months on the Stanford spelling score. Group 3 studied a base list of 230 words; nine pupils studied an additional 38 bonus words. This class achieved a mean gain of seven months, slightly less than the average growth expected (eight months). Group 4 also achieved seven months' growth in the eight months from October to May, but their base list was 106, though eleven pupils, or half the class, studied an additional hundred words. Thus, the average number of words studied by Group 1 was less than that of Groups 2 and 3 and less than the number (206) studied by half the pupils in Group 4. Yet the mean gain for Group 1 was one year, seven months. Thus there seems to be little relationship between number of words studied and amount of mean gain on a standardized spelling test.

Comparison of Scores on Review Tests

How well did pupils in each class retain the spelling of words they had studied during the year? A forty-word review test was composed for each class by random selection from the pool of words studied in each group. (The number of words on each master list was divided by 40 to

determine the intervals used in selecting the words.) Each of the four tests was administered by a different graduate student in two 20-word segments on successive days.

TABLE 4

Scores on Forty-Word Review Tests

Group	Mean No. Right	Mean Percent	Total No. Words Estimated as Learned*
1	34.6	86.5	160 (185)
2	28.2	70.5	149 (212)
3	29.1	72.8	167 (230)
4	32.6	81.5	86 (106)

*Extrapolated by applying per cent correct on 40 words to total pool -- the figure in parentheses.

Table 4 shows that the Experimental Group maintained its lead on the teacher-made review test as it did on the standardized test. The mean score for Group 1 was 86.5%, 15 points higher than Group 2 and 13.7 percentage points higher than Group 3. The higher mean score for Group 4 (81.5%) may be attributed to the review lessons held every five weeks and the general review conducted in April for this class.

An estimate of the mean total words learned by each class is reported in the last column of Table 4. This estimate was derived by applying the percentage achieved by each group on the 40-word review test to the total number of words studied by the whole class (exclusive of bonus words). Because Group 3 studied the largest total number, its estimated number of mean words learned is highest even though this group scored lowest on the review test and on the standardized test. This estimate is just that: a guess at the average number of words learned by the class as a whole. It is not an estimate of ability to spell, or an indication of what Hanna and Hanna (1965) describe as "true spelling power." The standardized test from the Stanford Achievement Battery is a better measure. A still further measure of spelling power was devised for this study.

Comparison of Spelling Power Scores

Spelling power enables one to spell words never actually studied in a formal program. It is, of course, the ultimate goal of all spelling instruction. To determine an indication of spelling power for each group, a 20-word sample from each 40-word test was given to each of the other groups. The sample was made up of the 20 words most frequently misspelled by the group that took the 40-word test. Group 1 was given three 20-word tests, each selected from the 40-word tests given to Groups 2, 3, and 4. The other three groups were tested in the same manner. The results are reported in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Mean Number of "Difficult" Words from Other Groups

Review Tests Spelled Correctly (out of 60)

Group	Group 1 Words	Group 2 Words	Group 3 Words	Group 4 Words	Total Mean
1		9 (5)	12 (14)	13 (5)	34 (24)
2	10 (6)		10 (4)	12 (9)	22 (19)
3	9 (11)	11 (5)		12 (7)	32 (23)
4	8 (1)	8 (1)	8 (3)		24 (5)

N.B. Figures in parentheses show number of "studied" words on each list.

It should be noted that not all the words among the 60 was really "new" for each group. Of the 60 words on the three tests taken by Group 1, 24 appeared on the master list selected for study for this experimental group. For Group 2, the number of words already studied was 19; for Group 3, 23; and for Group 4, 5. The numbers in parentheses in Table 5 show that Group 1, for example, had probably studied 14 of the 20 words from the Group 3 list. (Of course, because of the self-pacing feature of the program used by Group 1, it is possible that not all pupils had studied all 14 words. It should be remembered, too, that both Groups 1 and 3 used the Dolch List.)

The figures in Table 5 suggest that Group 4 exhibited the greatest amount of spelling power (as measured by this crude test) since these pupils spelled correctly an average of 24 words out of 60, and only 5 of these 60 had been previously studied. Although Group 1 had the highest

aggregate mean from the three tests (34 out of a possible 60), Group 3 is close behind. The group with the least spelling power is Group 2, which had a total mean of 22 words, but 19 out of the 60 had been previously studied.

Discussion

Even though three of the classrooms were considered control groups in this study, the teachers' interest in spelling was probably higher in all four classes than it would have been had no experiment taken place. Hence, it is not surprising that all four classes moved from a mean retardation of approximately six months to a mean grade score in May of 2.7. It seems likely, too, that the Hawthorne Effect is reflected in the decidedly superior gains made by the experimental group. But the gain on the standardized test was corroborated by this group's performance on the 40-word review test and on the test of "difficult" words from the other groups' lists. It seems fair to assume that the children in Group 1, who had had the lowest scores on the standardized spelling test in October, did indeed become better spellers. It seems fair, also, to attribute this growth in large part to the effectiveness of the modified Michigan Spelling Program.

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LISTENING AND LISTENING-READING AT TWO RATES OF PRESENTATION BY FIFTH GRADE PUPILS[1]

by R. A. Bruland

Listening, as a communication skill, has been a concern of educators for several years. Results from studies by Markgraf (1966) and Wilt (Duker, 1966) indicate that more than half of all classroom activities involve listening. Yet studies of how to maximize the listening efficiency of students are few in number by comparison to those assessing the status of listening skills.

Reviews of research of listening and reading in the intermediate grades, including those of Caughran (1953) and Hampleman (1958), seem to support the conclusion that listening generally is more efficient than reading for students in grades four, five and six. Yet teachers often state that even their most able students are poor listeners when the desired outcomes of instruction are learning and retaining facts and concepts.

Research by Caughran (1953), Smith (1959), and Crippen (1968) demonstrates that elementary school students performed better on comprehension tasks when presented learning materials simultaneously through listening and reading than through either mode alone.

Studies by Wood (1965) and Woodcock and Clark (1968) show that for most children of this age there is little loss of comprehension when information is presented at nearly twice the normal speaking rate. ". . . two advantages may accrue to many learners when they are presented spoken information at higher than normal speech rates: (1) the obvious advantage of more information transmitted per unit of time; and (2) the side effect of increased attention to the information as a result of its being presented at a rate nearer to the learner's processing capability." (Woodcock and Clark, 1968, p. 271)

The general process of changing rate of presentation without changing pitch is known as (time) compressed speech. It is done with a commercially available speech compressor which electro-mechanically removes segments of sound from a recorded message. The units removed are smaller than the shortest phoneme in English. By adjusting the length of the segment and the distance between segments, speech can be "compressed" to any rate without changing the speaker's intonation or pitch.

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[1]Richard A. Bruland. "Listening and Listening-Reading at Two Rates of Presentation by Fifth Grade Pupils." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1970.

Listening-learning stations are becoming very widely used in classrooms. Students, independently or in small groups, receive tape recorded instruction through headsets while listening or listening and viewing a film, filmstrips, slides, pictures, or written material.

In this study the investigator has taken a possible use of such listening-learning centers and modified it to test efficiency in learning through listening.

Purposes

This investigation has three major purposes, the first of which is to determine and compare the information gain of children in selected fifth grade classes when presented twenty passages at two rates of speed, normal and compressed, and with two modes of presentation, listening and simultaneous listening and reading. (The compression ratio used in this study was a constant 36% or from 178 to 275 wpm).

The second purpose is to compare information gains under each of the four experimental conditions for each of three IQ levels.

The third purpose is to explore the influence of training on standardized silent reading and listening tests.

A review of the pertinent research (omitted in this report) led to the following generalizations:

1. When information is presented orally to children which is too difficult to readily comprehend, or when it is presented at too high a rate, the ability to learn and retain that information is greatly lessened.

2. When information is presented both orally and visually, the learner can choose the mode most efficient for him, or if he both listens and reads the redundancy may be reinforcing. For other than easy-to-learn information, this bimodal presentation seems to be of greater advantage than taking in information through either listening or reading alone.

3. Listening to information presented at normal rates of 125 to 175 words per minute may be very tedious for many children unless the information is difficult or unless it has great novelty, or unless the motivation is high. Most children seem to be able to process information presented at higher rates.

4. For most elementary school children there is a slight loss in learning and retention efficiency from normal speaking rates up to a presentation rate of about 275 words per minute. At this point comprehension seems to drop sharply.

From these conclusions it is hypothesized that in the present study, children who listen to information presented at normal rates while they also read the same information will demonstrate greater learning and

retention than will children who only listen to the stories. These differences will be reflected in both daily comprehension tests and the tests of information retention.

Children who listen and those who simultaneously listen and read when presented information under the compressed speech condition will perform equally on both daily comprehension tests and the tests of information retention.

Population

Three fifth grade classes (the entire fifth grade population of 117 students) from each of two elementary schools in the East Syracuse-Minoa school district served as experimental treatment groups. The students are predominantly Caucasian from families described as working class.

All students were administered the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test*, Form A, by experienced examiners. From the results of this test students were grouped into three IQ ability levels--high ability, average ability, and low ability--with one third of the subjects within each school in each ability group. The reason for this preliminary grouping was so effects of the experimental treatments could be compared by performance levels on a non-reading verbal assessment. Results of this study can then be compared with outcomes of other similar studies.

Next, using a table of random numbers, students of the high ability groups were assigned in equal numbers to each of four treatment groups. Students in the average and low ability groups were assigned to treatments in the same manner. Using analysis of variance techniques, IQ differences were found only between ability levels. There were no differences found between treatment groups or interaction effects. On this one dimension, randomization seems to have equalized the treatment groups. Mean IQ's at the low,average and high ability levels are 87, 100, and 120 respectively.

The treatment conditions are as follows:

Listening-only/Normal rate treatment groups listened to the recorded study lessons during study time. The lessons were presented at a normal speech rate of approximately 175 wpm.

Reading-listening/Normal rate treatment groups had a written text of the study lessons which they were directed to read as they listened to the recorded text, as in the Listening-only/Normal rate treatment.

Listening-only/Compressed rate treatment groups listened to the recorded text as in the Listening-only/Normal rate treatment. The message, however, was compressed 36%, changing the rate of presentation from approximately 175 wpm to approximately 275 wpm.

Reading-listening/Compressed rate groups simultaneously received both the visual and the audio presentation with the recorded speech time

compressed 36%.

Procedures

Twenty stories were selected to accompany the general fifth grade social studies theme of history and geography of North and South America. The stories were chosen on the basis of difficulty, interest, suitability, and the assumption that the students were unfamiliar with their content.

The twenty stories were tape recorded by an experienced announcer in a sound studio with professional equipment, and normal and compressed recordings were made. Typed scripts of the stories were prepared for the simultaneous reading-listening groups. Each story was 1400 to 2100 words in length and had a readability score in the range of grades 4.6 to 7.0 with a mean of 6.0 according to the *Dale-Chall Formula* (1948).

These stories were judged by the experimenter to be difficult for most of the students of this population if they were required to read them. Performance on the comprehension subtest of Form 1, Survey D, of the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests* used as a pretest indicated that the low ability groups' mean grade score was 4.6, that of the average ability groups was 5.1, and the high ability groups scored 5.6 on this measure.

Parenthetically, it appears that the students in this population are not performing in reading as one might expect them to perform. Using the formula of Bond and Tinker (1967, p. 95), the estimated reading ability should approximate (years in school X IQ) + 1.0. Applying this formula, the expected reading grade score for the low ability groups would be 4.9; for the average ability groups, 5.5; and the high ability groups, 6.5. It appears that this population has not made expected reading growth.

Tests

Comprehension tests were constructed for use with each of the daily stories and as unit tests. All items offered four choices. The tests included literal, interpretive, and main idea questions, but most of the questions depended on recall of information. The daily tests consisted of ten questions designed to measure recall.

A 30-item *Pre Information Test* was given before the experimental period to test for knowledge of information. This same test was administered again six weeks after the experimental period as a *Delayed Information Test*.

Other tests were constructed to measure knowledge and retention of content. Two 20-item tests were administered after days ten and twenty These tests were measures of information contained in lessons 1 to 10 and 11 to 20. They were termed *Mid Test* and *Post Test*. All experimenter-constructed tests of information (daily, pre, post, and delayed) were read to the children as they read them. This procedure was an attempt to

remove the effects of varying reading ability.

In addition to the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test*, the following pretests were administered: (1) Form 1M, Survey D, of the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests*. All four subtests (Rate and Accuracy, Vocabulary, and Comprehension) were used to measure silent reading abilities. Form 2M, Survey D, was used as a post test immediately following the experimental period. (2) *STEP: Listening*, Form 4A. This test measures plain-sense listening comprehension, interpretation, and evaluation and application. Form 4B was used as a post test.

Daily Procedures

At a specified time in the morning students in the treatment group classes left their regular self-contained classroom and went to their listening period class. In each of these classes there were approximately equal numbers of students from the high ability, average ability and low ability groups. Two experimental groups were randomly assigned to each teaching class so that it had within it equal numbers of students in treatments Listening/Normal and Reading-Listening/Normal or Listening/Compressed and Reading-Listening/Compressed. Each school had at least one class of each experimental grouping arrangement. Students were seated so that each treatment group was independent of the other.

Some students from each group were assigned to pass out headsets and set up jack-boxes for plugging them in. Others readied the tape recorder and distributed paper materials. This process took about five minutes.

The teacher then introduced the story for the day, briefly defined the selected vocabulary, and provided a purpose for listening. The lesson plan was prepared by the experimenter and was adhered to by all six participating teachers.

The tape recorder was then turned on and the children first heard a short series of statements from which they could adjust the volume of their headsets. A direction was given that the students in the simultaneous reading and listening group were to read as they listened. Then they listened or read and listened to the story and took the comprehension test.

The listening time for the daily stories varied. For the normal speed groups the listening time was between 8 minutes, 42 seconds and 14 minutes, 31 seconds averaging about 12 minutes. The listening time for the compressed speech groups varied from 6 minutes, 31 seconds to 10 minutes, 5 seconds, averaging about 9 minutes.

All students listened to the comprehension test as they read it. This was done to remove the effects of varying reading abilities. As soon as the story ended students turned over the test which had been placed face down on their desks and marked their responses to the questions as the announcer read the questions to them. Tests were then exchanged by the

students and corrected with the teacher reading the correct answers. The percent correct was then entered by each student on his own bar graph.

All equipment and materials were then put away and students returned to their regular classrooms. The entire procedure took less than thirty minutes each day.

Results

The statistical model employed in this investigation was a four-way analysis of variance with a factorial design for repeated measures (Kirk, 1968, SPR-pru. q split plot. pp. 294-298). Planned comparisons and Sheffi post hoc comparisons were also used (Hays, 1963, pp. 474-487).

Results will be discussed in answer to the following questions:

Question 1. What effects, if any, did each of the two rates and two modes of presentation have upon knowledge gained by fifth grade students as determined by differences between pre and post test experimental measures of content knowledge? Are these differences, if any, consistent across three ability levels?

The sources for the data used to answer this question are the experimenter-constructed *Pre, Mid, Post, and Delayed Information Tests.*

This question will be answered by posing and answering two subquestions.

Question 1a. Are there performance differences for the entire treatment population between rates of presentation groups and modes of presentation groups?

Figure 1 is used here to illustrate this discussion. It should be pointed out that for the *entire treatment population* there were differences between the four tests. The information effects on the analysis of variance show these differences to be statistically different at the .01 level. Planned comparisons show these significant differences to be between pre and mid tests, and post and delayed tests. There were nearly identical performance levels between mid and post, and post and delayed tests. Post hoc comparisons show significant differences between the pre and delayed tests at the .01 level, but no statistical differences between post and delayed tests at the .01 level.

Between normal and compressed rates of presentation groups, considering all four tests, there were no significant differences. Performance on the pre, mid and delayed tests showed so little difference between treatment means that it outweighed the difference found on the post test.

There was, however, a significant rate X tests interaction at the .01 level indicating test-to-test differences. Between the mid and post test there was continued growth for the compressed rate groups and a

slight performance decrease for the normal rate groups that would account for the significant interaction. For the compressed rate groups there appears to be a learning-to-learn phenomenon on the first ten daily lessons which seems, by comparison, to have stimulated increased growth on the post test covering the second ten days of treatment. This advantage was clearly lost on the delayed test given six weeks after the instructional period.

The differences between listening and reading-listening modes of presentation are shown to be significant on the between blocks analysis of variance at the .05 level. Inspection of Figure 1 shows that performance means on the mid, post, and delayed tests were different and consistent. There was very little difference on pre test mean performance.

It appears that the two mode groups for the entire treatment population were nearly the same on pre test performance. The effects of daily instruction clearly favored the simultaneous reading-listening groups. This difference was maintained for six weeks after the experimental period.

Non-significant F-ratios on rate X mode and rate X mode X tests interaction indicate rate effects are consistent across both modes and the mode effects are consistent across both rates of presentation. The effects of the treatments on performance from high to low appear to be reading-listening/compressed, reading-listening/normal, listening/compressed, listening/normal.

Question 1b. Are these effects consistent across three ability levels?

Inspection of Figure 1 shows that the findings for the whole population are generally the same at each of the three ability levels. For all four treatment groups the F-ratio for ability is statistically significant at the .01 level. Planned comparisons show that for the total population over the summed tests, the high ability group demonstrated a higher performance level than did the low ability group. This mean difference is significant at the .01 level. There were no differences on the first ten daily lessons, which seem to have stimulated increased growth on the post test covering the second ten days of treatment. This advantage was clearly lost on the delayed test given six weeks after the instructional period.

The differences between listening-only and reading-listening modes of presentation were found to be significant at the .05 level. Inspection of Figure 1 shows that performance means on the mid, post, and delayed tests were different and consistent. There was very little difference on pre test mean performance. However, the significantly different and consistent performance on the mid, post, and delayed tests outweighed any pre to mid test performance change.

It appears that the two mode groups for the entire treatment population were nearly the same on pre test performance. The effects of daily instruction clearly favored the simultaneous reading-listening groups. This difference was maintained for six weeks after the experimental period as shown by delayed test performance.

Non-significant F-ratios on the rate X mode and rate X mode X tests interaction indicate rate effects are consistent across both modes and the modes across both compressed rates of presentation groups. Performance on the pre, mid, and delayed tests showed so little difference between treatment means that it outweighed the difference found on the post test.

A significant rate X test interaction indicates test-to-test differences. Between the mid and the post test there was continued growth for the compressed rate groups and a slight performance decrease for the normal rate groups that would account for the significant interaction. For the compressed rate groups there appears to be a learning-to-learn phenomenon found between the average and low ability groups and the average and high ability groups. The non-significant rate X ability, mode X ability, and rate X mode X ability interactions indicate that the pattern found within ability levels is consistent across modes, rates, and their interaction.

There was also an ability X tests interaction, significant at the .01 level, indicating differences by abilities between specific tests of knowledge of content. These differences can best be examined in Figure 1 by comparing treatment group performance between each ability level.

For the low ability level the normal rate groups were superior to the compressed rate groups on the pre test. This difference was lost on the mid and post tests. There was a nearly identical spread between means on the pre and delayed tests (which was the same test); however, the positions between normal and compressed groups reversed themselves.

Between low ability listening and reading-listening mode groups, the bimodal condition seems clearly to be superior to that of listening-alone on tests of knowledge and retention of content.

For the average ability level the compressed rate groups showed a continuous growth pattern from the mid to the post test which may indicate a learning-to-learn phenomenon over the first ten lessons. This gain was only partially lost on the delayed information test. The mode differences show great gain for the listening group from the pre to the mid test which was diminished on the post test, while the reading-listening group showed a continuous but slower growth rate from pre to post test. The group differences were lost on the delayed test.

For the high ability level, the compressed groups demonstrated a fairly steady growth pattern from the pre to the post test which dropped sharply on the delayed test. This may reflect lower performance over the first ten daily lessons. The modal comparison shows a steady growth rate from pre to post test which is greater for the reading-listening groups. This advantage seems to be lost on the delayed test.

For the low ability level the effects of the treatments on performance from high to low seem to be reading-listening/normal, reading-listening/compressed, listening/normal, listening/compressed. The clear advantage is for the reading-listening mode. For the average and high

Figure 1. Comparison of Group Mean Percentages on Pre, Mid, Post and Delayed Unit Tests

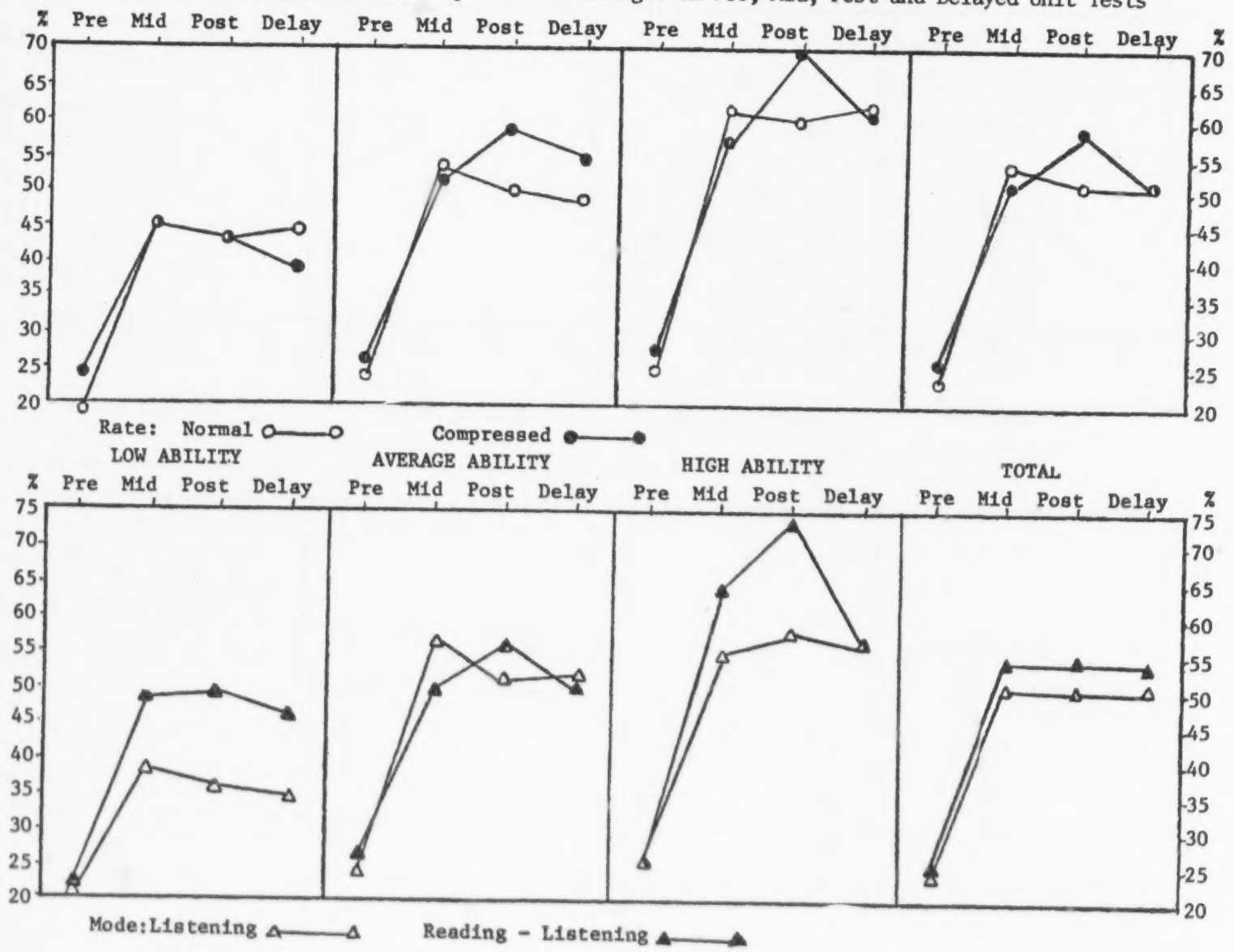
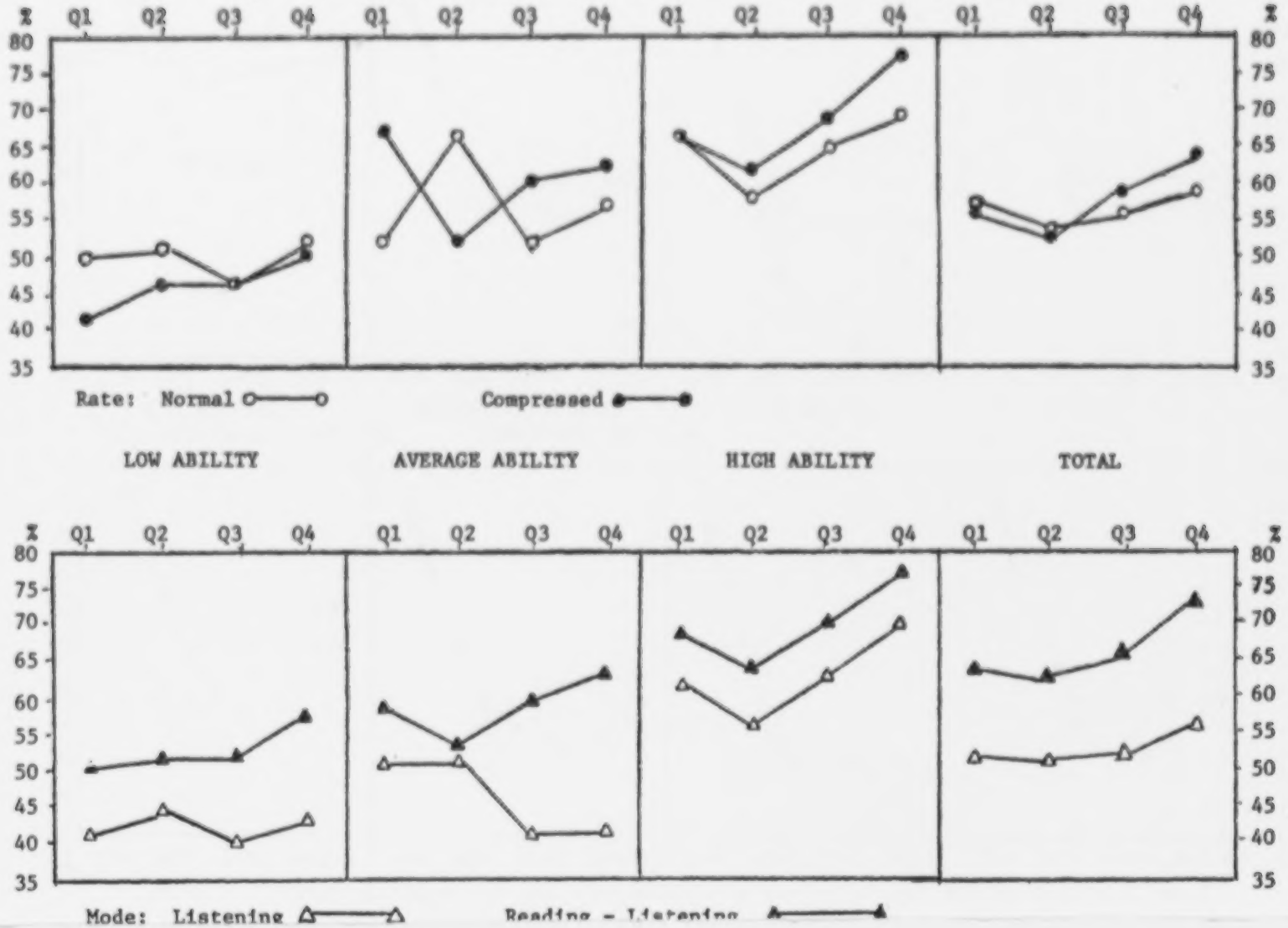


Figure 2. Comparison of Daily Comprehension Test Scores by Quarters



ability levels the effects of the treatments on performance from high to low appear to be reading-listening/compressed, reading-listening/normal, listening/compressed, and listening/normal. It appears that the compressed rate and the reading-listening mode have definite advantages on tests of content. This advantage is not extended to the delayed test of retention.

Question 2. What effects, if any, did each of the two rates and two modes of presentation have upon daily performance of fifth grade students on comprehension quizzes over twenty lessons? Are these differences, if any, consistent across three ability levels?

The sources of data used to answer this question are the experimenter-constructed comprehension tests administered as part of each daily lesson. Each test had ten questions with four answer choices. In order to facilitate discussion and illustration, the days have been pooled into four blocks. Days 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20 are referred to as quarters, Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4, respectively. The analysis of variance used which is sensitive enough to take in each day does not make these distinctions. Figure 2 is used to illustrate this discussion.

Question 2a. Are there performance differences for the entire treatment population between rates of presentation groups and modes of presentation groups?

The analysis of variance performed shows that across twenty days there is a significant F-ratio at the .01 level. For the entire treatment population there were significant differences between days. To see if there was consistent and significant directional change over time the days were grouped by quarterly blocks and mean block comparisons were made using post hoc analysis. No significant differences were found between any two blocks indicating that the mean differences over days were within blocks rather than between blocks. The changes do not appear to be consistent over the twenty day span, indicating no significant growth for the entire population.

For the entire treatment population the effects of two rates and two modes of population can be examined in Figure 2. (The total population is graphed on the extreme right portion.)

In the analysis of variance a very low F-ratio of 0.761 for rate indicates that *over* twenty days there were very little mean differences in performance between the normal and compressed groups. The rate X days interaction indicates that there were treatment differences *between* days. This becomes relatively unimportant, however, when considering the overall effects of a treatment. For this population, the performance levels were statistically the same for the two rate groups.

To discuss differences between the listening-only and reading-listening modes of presentation for the entire population reference is again made to the analysis of variance. An F-ratio of 21.174, significant at the .01 level, indicates that across twenty daily lessons there were greater effects from the reading-listening mode of presentation compared to the listening-only presentation. A mode X day interaction F-ratio of

less than 1.00 shows that the modal presentation differences were also consistent between days. The visual representation of this statement clearly shows these differences (lower portion, Figure 2).

It appears that for the entire treatment population, compressed rate of presentation is slightly superior to the normal rate only in the last two quarters (ten daily lessons). The average readability scores for the last two quarters were lower than for the first two quarters (Table 5). This may indicate that compressed speech is more effective on easier passages. The reading-listening mode of presentation is unquestionably superior to the listening-only mode over the entire treatment period.

Question 2b. Are these differences consistent across three ability levels ?

For the summed treatment groups over all days there are significant differences between ability levels. This is shown by F-ratios, significant at the .01 level, in the analysis of variance. Using planned comparisons, it was found that the differences are between high and low ability groups and not between the low and the average or the average and the high ability groups.

For the low ability groups it appears that the normal rate produced superior results over the compressed rate, and the reading-listening mode produced better results than the listening-alone condition. The treatment effects from high to low for the low ability level appear to be reading-listening/normal, reading-listening/compressed, listening/normal, listening/compressed.

For the average ability groups, it appears that in three of the four quarters the normal rate is superior to the compressed rate. The great fluctuations in Q2 are inexplicable in relation to the performance in other ability levels. The bimodal presentation shows a more stable growth pattern across days compared to the listening alone condition, which resembles the low ability level in mean score performance in the final two quarters. The treatment effects from high to low for the average ability level appear to be reading-listening/compressed, reading-listening/normal, listening/compressed, listening/normal.

The high ability groups show a definite pattern of growth over the treatment period which seems to be characteristic of ability level rather than a function of different treatment effects. Like the average ability group, the compressed rate condition appears superior to the normal rate and the reading-listening mode seems markedly superior to the listening-only mode. For the high ability groups, the treatment effects from high to low appear to be reading-listening/compressed, reading-listening/normal, listening/compressed, and reading-listening/normal.

It appears that there were differences between ability levels by rate conditions despite the non-significant interaction F-ratios. The superiority of the compressed to the normal rate conditions in the average ability blocks (except Q3) and the high ability blocks seems to have outweighed the superiority of the normal rate condition in the low ability

blocks.

Question 3. What effects, if any, did each of the two rates and two modes of presentation have on silent reading performance (i.e., speed and accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension) of fifth grade students? Are these differences, if any, consistent across three ability levels?

The *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests,* Survey D, Forms 1M and 2M were used as pre and post tests. They serve as the sources of information for the discussion of this question. Because performances on all subtests (Rate and Accuracy, Vocabulary, and Comprehension) were similar, they will not be discussed separately. The same analysis of variance techniques used in discussion of previous questions show that the only differences in performance means were between high and low ability levels. Rate and mode treatments had no statistically significant effects. The significant F-ratios between pre and post tests (excepting subtest *Vocabulary*) indicate that from the pre to the post test there were statistically significant *raw score* changes over all abilities and all treatments. Comparison of treatment to reference group means indicates further that these changes were probably due to something other than treatment effects (i.e. maturation, practice effect). Finally all raw scores were converted to standard scores (mean 50 and S.D. 10 on standardization population), group means were computed for the present population, and comparisons were made to Table 10 of the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests Technical Manual* (1965), "Values for computing minimum significant differences between two standard scores for the same group on two different forms of the same subtest taken at two different times within the same grade."

Again, no significant differences were found on any subtest for the entire population, any ability level, or any treatment groups. It appears that the treatments had no effects on this standardized silent reading test for the whole population or any subgroup.

Question 4. What effects, if any did each of the two rates and two modes of presentation have on the listening skills of fifth grade students? Are these differences, if any, consistent across three ability levels?

The *STEP: Listening Test,* Forms 4A and 4B were used as pre and post tests. They provide the sources of information for the discussion of this question.

There were *raw score* losses from the pre test to the post test. A comparison of standard score conversion tables in the administrative manuals indicates that form B is more difficult than form A. From the pre vs post analysis of variance the raw score losses are not significant for the entire population.

As on all other tests, differences between high and low ability levels were found. With no significant differences on rate, mode, and pre vs post comparisons, this and the rate X ability significant interaction become relatively meaningless.

It appears that on the listening test the treatments had no practical effects for the whole population or for any subgroup.

Conclusion and Discussion

This investigation was designed to answer certain questions regarding the relative effectiveness of normal vs compressed speech on listening vs reading-listening as ways of learning and retaining information contained in twenty stories for fifth grade students of varying abilities.

Three fifth grade classes in each of two schools listened to or listened to as they read stories presented at two rates, 178 and 275 wpm. One fourth of the students listened to the stories at normal speeds; one fourth read as they listened at normal speeds; one fourth listened at the compressed rate; and one fourth simultaneously read and listened at the compressed rate. Students were randomly assigned to these treatment conditions.

The experimental procedures took place simultaneously with regular classes in each school dividing up during the listening period and going to their assigned station in the classroom of their assigned treatment. Each story, along with an introduction and a follow-up comprehension test, was presented through headsets connected to a tape recorder.

Experimenter designed tests of knowledge and retention of content of the stories and standardized silent reading and listening tests were used as pre and post test measures of experimental effects.

In the preceding section of this paper four questions were posed and discussed. This final section will contain discussion of three hypotheses which come from the purposes stated near the beginning of the paper. It will conclude with some general observations.

Hypothesis 1. The amount of information learned will differ significantly between treatment groups.

For the entire treatment population this hypothesis was accepted. The differences between the two rates of presentation are not great. They do, however, consistently favor the performance of the compressed groups. This was shown on the unit tests and the daily tests.

This particular group of fifth grade students, under the compressed speech condition, performed at least as well as students under normal rate conditions with a 36% savings in time. During this experiment the time saving was not evident, being lost in student movement to experimental classrooms, setting up equipment, distributing materials, taking and correcting the test for each story, collecting materials and equipment, etc. Under non-experimental conditions where information may be broadcast to dozens or even hundreds of students, or where many small groups or individual children may simply pick up a tape cassette and play it for the information contained, this savings in time is one of practical

significance.

To justify the cost of compressed speech recordings three conditions must prevail: (1) the material recorded must be for semi-permanent use; (2) good quality recordings are being made for normal listening speeds anyway; (3) the recordings will be used continuously by numbers of students. Conditions (1) and (3) are not so important if a school system owns its own speech compression equipment.

The finding that children and adults do as well when listening to speech compressed to 275 wpm is supported by findings in other studies. (Fairbanks, Guttman and Miron, 1957; Foulke and others, 1962; Foulke and Sticht, 1967; Foulke, 1968; Woodcock and Clark, 1968; Sticht, 1969-1970). Many of these studies found a slight but non-significant decline in comprehension from 175 to 275 wpm, with a sharp decrease in comprehension at the latter point. The studies usually report a one-time test with very abbreviated or no training. The present study shows that with training, over time, slight decrease in comprehension does not occur. In fact, for this population there was increase.

Comparison of the listening-only mode to that of reading-listening has shown clear statistical differences favoring the reading-listening mode across all tests, across all days, and across both rates of presentation. This finding is supported by other studies (Caughran, 1953; Smith, 1959; Jester and Travers, 1966; Crippen, 1968). In these four studies the simultaneous reading-listening condition was superior to listening-alone *and* to reading-alone. Because the students in this population were generally poor readers, (that is, had not made expected progress), the general conclusion is drawn here that for this population the bimodal reading-listening presentation of connected discourse for comprehension purposes is more effective than for either mode alone.

For most students fitting the general description of those in the present study, it appears that in using listening-learning stations or other learning situations similar to this which do not offer free discussion, the bimodal presentation would be more efficient in terms of comprehension of the materials. The findings here have supported either or both of the following theoretical positions. Jester and Travers (1966) stated that in bimodal presentation individuals will pick up the mode preferred for receiving information. Solley and Murphey (1960) hypothesize that reception of information simultaneously through two sensory channels may result in facilitation of structuring of information and therefore the two channels reinforce one another for increased learning over reception through either channel alone.

The concern of Broadbent (1957) and Travers (1964) for confusion caused by jamming of the informational processing system due to overload seems to find no support, at least for the majority of the students in this study.

Hypothesis 2. The amount of information learned will not differ significantly in treatment by ability group interaction.

At the low ability level comparisons were made between performance of rates of presentation groups on comprehension. On unit and daily tests the normal rate groups outperformed the compressed rate groups. This finding is generally supported in the study by Woodcock and Clark (1968). The studies are procedurally different enough that only intuitive comparisons can be made. From the Woodcock and Clark study, that of Gropper (1969) and the present study, it appears that in the intermediate grades, students with lower IQ's (75-90) would profit more from discourse presented at near a normal speaking rate of 175 wpm than they would from compressed speech presented at 275 wpm.

Speech compressed 36% appears to be as good or better than the normal rate in the average and high ability levels. The arguments made for the entire population (Hypothesis 1) would be particularly applicable to these ability levels.

The reading-listening groups had higher performance means than did the listening-only groups. This was shown to be generally true across all ability levels on most unit tests and daily comprehension tests. These outcomes are supported in the findings of other studies.

The conclusion drawn for each ability level is the same as that for the entire population: the bimodal reading-listening presentation of connected discourse, for comprehension purposes, is more effective than the single-mode listening presentation.

Hypothesis 3. The various treatments will not affect performance on standardized silent reading and listening tests to a significant degree.

This hypothesis must be accepted for this investigation. Pre-post differences on the *Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests* and the *STEP: Listening Tests* showed only normal growth, seemingly independent of any treatment effects. Because the treatment groups showed slight trends toward change as compared to the reference groups, there is the possibility that with a longer treatment period, significant change might have occurred.

If specific comprehension skills had been taught and/or a standardized silent reading test had been chosen that was more similar in format to the treatment tests, performance on a test of this nature might have been significantly affected.

On the listening test, the comprehension requirements involve plain-sense listening comprehension, interpretation, and evaluation and application. It is not likely that treatments involving comprehension and recall of specific material would affect this test in such a short treatment period.

The results of this study on silent reading and listening are generally supported by other studies in listening (Merson, 1962; Hollingsworth, 1964-1965; Reeves, 1965; Estoy, 1968). They also found no effects of daily listening lessons on standardized listening and, in some studies, reading tests.

General Observations. Prior to this study purposes and procedures were explained to teachers with students involved. Participation was on a voluntary basis. In a series of final planning meetings, the teachers offered many helpful suggestions for implementing the study.

Teachers were aware of the possibility of extraneous variables and made efforts to control them. They followed the outlined procedures rigorously. Students appeared to enjoy the daily procedure and the stories. Consequently, the teachers did also. Most commented from time to time on the desirability of the "quiet half hour". When the experiment ended, four of the six teachers spontaneously and independently expressed their regret.

They also commented on the desirability of using the reading-listening technique if a variety and great number of tapes could be made available for use within the existing curriculum. They expressed no preference for compressed or normal rate tapes, but did agree that the time saving with compressed rates might be significant.

There were no discipline problems connected with this study. Students known for deviant classroom behavior showed none of it. There seemed to be something critical about being part of an experiment, having one's own headset, and listening to something important and interesting. Students enjoyed graphing the comprehension test results each day.

Many of those in the listening-only groups seemed to have nothing to do with their hands or eyes. They toyed with pencils, doodled on the backs of tests, and were distracted by objects and movements within the room. However, some students in these groups cradled their head in their arms rather than be distracted. Compared to the reading-listening groups, task concentration appeared to be difficult to achieve.

Students in the reading-listening groups had something to do with their hands and eyes, and they showed none of the bodily movement which accompanied the listening-only presentation. It appeared that nearly all of these students followed their scripts as the announcer read. There was a uniform turning of pages. A few students described as poor were lost some of the time. There seemed to be no greater proportion of these students in either of the rate groups. Four students, again academically identified as low-average to low, often covered their eyes and did not follow their scripts. This condition was not restricted to either particular rate group. When interviewed these students almost unanimously agreed that they preferred to listen and they disliked the reading part of the presentation. For some children, apparently the bimodal presentation may be annoying; or they may require more training in using this process to allow them to "read" without the usual discomfort.

The results of this investigation have practical as well as statistical significance. The teachers and almost all the students seem to feel that bimodal presentation of information has merit. Compressed speech, although not obviously an aid to comprehension, appears to have practical value in terms of economy of time. The procedures investigated hold promise for improving the effectiveness of elementary school classroom teaching techniques.

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